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1997

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Issue

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VMAG

Halloween Special

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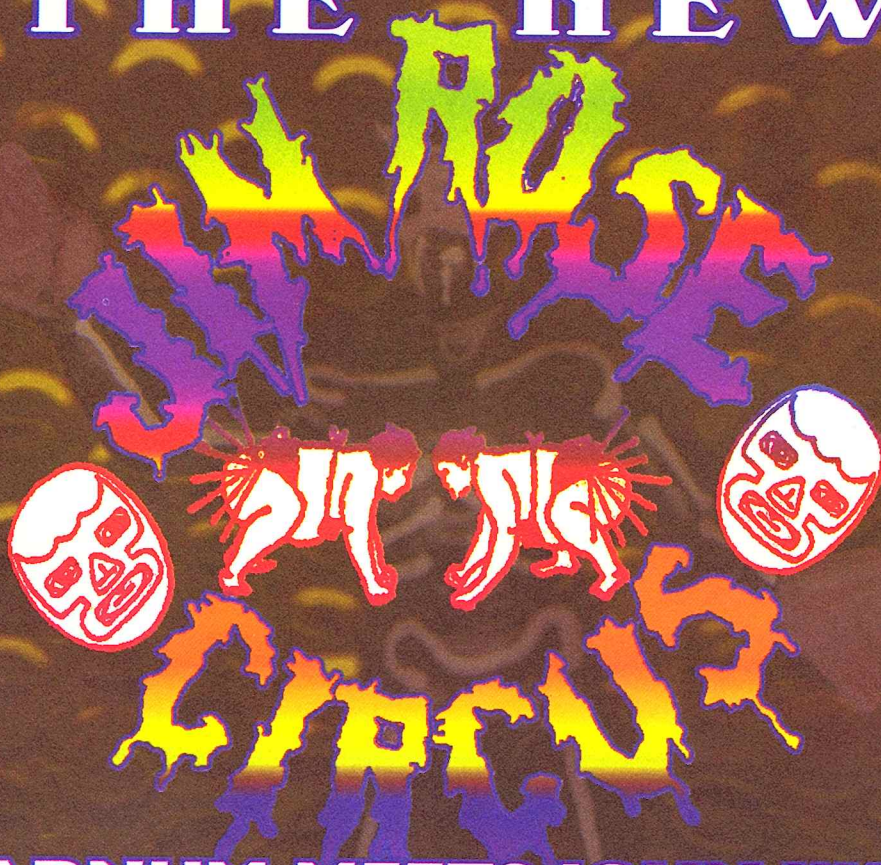
THE
MACABRE
TATTOO ART
OF ERIC TAZBOT

- Dead, Famous and from the Valley
- The Dark Thoughts of Stephen King, David Cronenberg, Anne Rice and Others
- Valley Cemeteries: A Beginner's Guide
- Plus: Videos, Music, Comics & More

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PRESENTS

THE NEW



**P. T. BARNUM MEETS JOHN WATERS
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THE UNDER CARD WILL BE

MEXICAN TRANSVESTITE WRESTLING

ALSO

**SEE THE WOMAN WHO BLOWS FIRE FROM THE PART OF HER THAT IS MOST A MRS.
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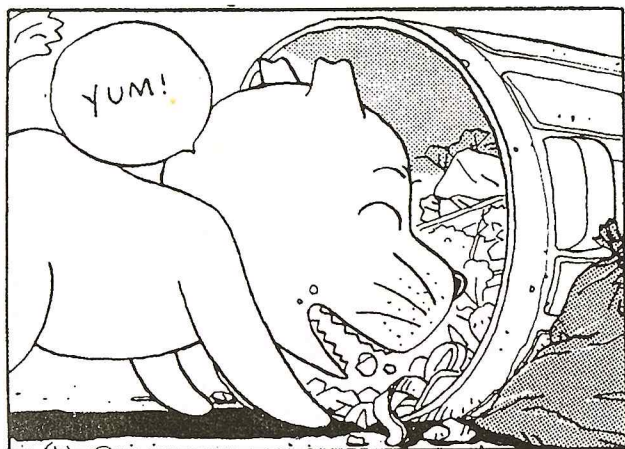
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Cover illustration by the multi-talented (and good friend) Mike Dooney; shoulder tattoo by Eric Talbot; cover coloring by Rob.

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Morsels

compiled by
Bill Moulage

AFTERLIFE, THE DISPARITY CONTINUES

The New York Times reports that patent 5, 517, 791 was recently awarded to Hali Weiss, an architect turned tombstone designer, for a new type of tombstone that features a 500-word biography of the deceased (in 20-point type) that is sandblasted onto a cylindrical rotating element that is integrated into the design of the tombstone.

"The moveable element increases the surface area of the monument, so that you can fit more information on it. The element can be any shape — an oval, sphere, rectangle, cylinder," said Ms. Weiss.

In addition, a photographic masking process allows for the use of photographs or genealogical trees alongside the text.

Ms. Weiss believes that the American funeral industry has depersonalized death but that baby-boomers are going to reclaim and repersonalize the death care industry. She believes that cemeteries of the future will be libraries of past lives.

"Imagine what a visit to a Civil War cemetery would be like if, instead of just names and dates, you could read life stories of everyone buried there," she said. "It would be quite a history lesson."

And all yours for just \$6,000 to \$9,000.



Because I Could Not Stop For Death

Because I could not stop for Death -
He kindly stopped for me -
The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
And Immortality.

We slowly drove - He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labour and my leisure too,
For His Civility -

We passed the School, where Children
strove

At Recess - In the Ring
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
We passed the Setting Sun -

Or rather - He passed Us -
The Dews drew quivering and chill -
For only Gossamer, my Gown -
My Tippet - only Tulle -

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground -
The Roof was scarcely visible -
The Cornice - in the Ground -

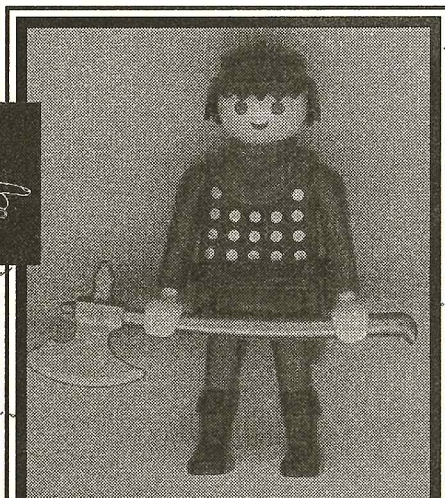
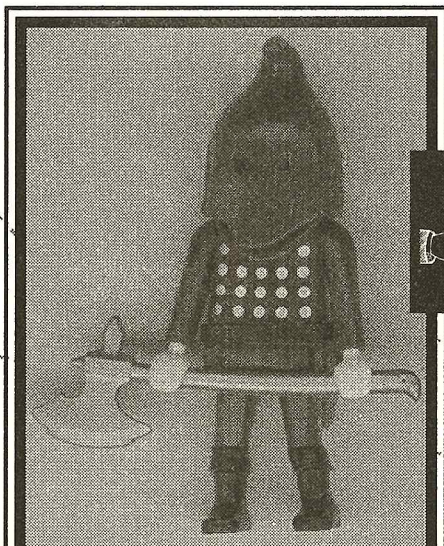
Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity -

- Emily Dickinson (from The Poems of
Emily Dickinson, Thomas H. Johnson, ed.)



V-MAG

Morsels



YAAAY! I LOVE MY JOB!

"I love chopping the heads off of peasants! It's fun!" is what Playmobile's Happy Executioner seems to be saying. Although we don't know if this is his real name, he is figure #4594 in the Playmobile catalog. Only at finer toy stores.



HE LEFT HIS MARK

Marvel Comics editor Mark Gruenwald poured his life into his work and in death all he got was a crummy comic book reprint.

Gruenwald's 1985 12-issue "Squadron Supreme" comic book series was reissued last month as a single volume graphic novel — and printed with ink that was blended with his ashes, the Associated Press reported.

Gruenwald was senior executive editor at Marvel Comics when he died of a heart attack on Aug. 12, 1996, at age 42.

His will had requested that he be cremated, and "for his ashes to be mixed in with the printer ink during the printing process of a comic book," his widow, Catherine, writes in the introduction to the book.

"Yes," states the introduction, "the pages you are about to turn contain the actual particles of Gru."

As would the newsprint stains on your fingers.

A FINAL NOTE

Guns aren't lawful;

Nooses give;

Gas smells awful;

You might as well live.

- Dorothy Parker





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HAPPY NEW YEAR?

A Brief History of Halloween

by George Claxton

"When the night wind howls in the chimney cowl and the bat in the moonlight flies. When inky clouds like funeral shrouds hang over the midnight skies. When footpads quail and night birds wail and black dogs bay the moon. Then is the specters' holiday. Then is the ghosts' high noon."

— Sir Arthur Sullivan

One finds historically that dispensing with popular rituals and ceremonies is often more difficult than getting rid of stubborn carpet stains or house guests who have overstayed their welcome.

Among the most resilient of the ancient celebrations still practiced in modern times is Halloween.

The festival of Halloween as it is observed in the United States today grew out of Celtic ceremonies to propitiate the dead and share with them the fruits of recent harvests.

In ancient times Halloween was known as Samhain (pronounced sow-hain) and marked the Celtic New Year, the time at which barriers between the natural world and the world of the supernatural were at their thinnest and most malleable.

Among the Celts it was believed that at the New Year the spirits of the dead would return to their old haunts and visit friends and family there. It was also believed that the visiting spirits would be hungry and so began the practice of placing food upon the hearth to feed them and keep them from doing mischief in the house.

The propitiation of spirits with food survives into our modern festival with the practice of handing out candy and snacks to costumed children masquerading as creatures of the night.

Samhain was one of the most durable of the Celtic festivals and was in fact so long-lived that in A. D. 835 the

Catholic Church transplanted its All Souls and All Saints festivals from May to November to counteract the lingering commemoration of the pagan rites.

Samhain celebrations as they were practiced in Scotland in the 1600's still included dancing around bonfires, the sacrifice of foodstuffs, and attempts to divine the future. The future that people most often tried to discover in Halloween rites seems to have been the likelihood of marriage and the identity of the destined loved one. In one Irish rite if a man went out with nine grains of oats in his mouth and walked about until he heard a girl's name called, he would then know the name of his future wife. Reasonable people may debate if this method is any worse than going to a singles bar.

Food played an important part in the divination of Scotland. In one game rings, coins and a thimble are baked in a cake and pastry then sliced up. Those who get a piece of cake with a ring will be wed, those who receive a coin will be rich and the one who chooses the thimble will be an old maid or have ill luck in the coming year.

A game more familiar in the United States is that of bobbing for apples. Originally a coin or other such token was placed in one apple and the person who chose that piece of fruit would have luck for the coming year.

So here then is a wish for a coin or ring for you all, a Joyous Samhain and a Happy Halloween.

FEATURE



W

hen I attended UMass in the mid-Seventies, Bill Cosby was working on his graduate degrees, and the buzz around campus was that a legitimate famous guy was indeed walking around just like one of us. I never saw him nor did any of my friends, but we kept hearing about sightings down at the tennis courts. It was like my belief in the Loch Ness Monster. I didn't have to see the beast to have faith in the reports I read, and I did believe that Fat Albert himself was dodging the fallen bricks from the library like the rest of us.

You just don't expect to see

celebrities in your backyard. I don't know

why people are always confounded to find out that so many famous people have a connection to western Massachusetts. I suppose it's the notion that nothing ever happens in your home town, and all the celebrities must come from Los Angeles or New York.

Here's an example. I was standing in the Montague Book Mill last fall and I noticed a woman who appeared very familiar. When she began to speak I knew who she was... television actress and slut monkey Golden Girl Rue McClanahan. I snuck over to my wife and our friend and furtively told them. We all then peeked and made a determined effort to allow her to buy her used books without gawkers hanging on her every move.

I should know better. My buddy Ray Kelly's column in the Union-News confirms that famous folks do get their start in the real world of

western Massachusetts. I'm not sure if Rue McClanahan was just passing through Montague, but Ray routinely tells his readers about the activities of celebs with for-real local roots such as Uma Thurman, John Shea, Paige Turco, Taj Mahal,

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Bill Pullman, and even Richard Gere (who attended UMass and dropped out his junior year).

The most interesting Favorite Daughter, in my opinion, is Springfield's own June Foray whose family left their home on Orange Street and travelled to California where June eventually became the voice of Rocky in Rocky and Bullwinkle and a dozen other animated characters.

But what about those who came before them? Western Massachusetts is practically crawling with connections

t o

Dead, Famous &

from the valley

famous dead people, and at this time of year, it's appropriate to discuss a few of them.

Some, of course, are tenuous. Springfield has an interesting connection with the great swashbuckler Errol Flynn. Flynn's last girlfriend was indeed a girl.

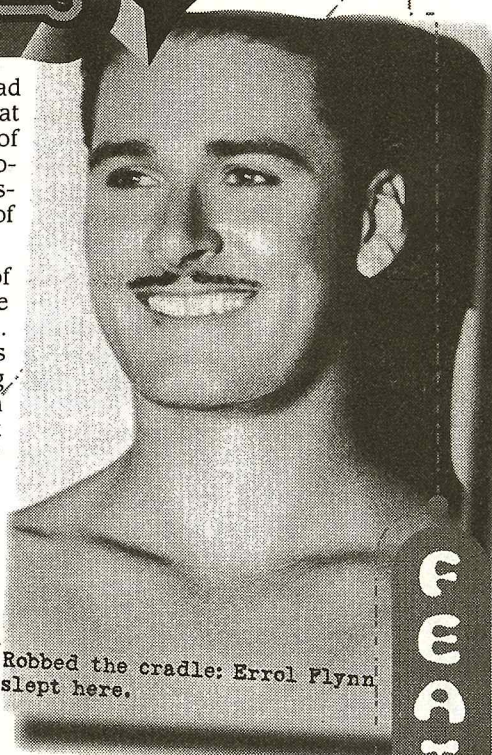
Beverly Aadland, was only 15 when she met Flynn. They made a very bad film together, Cuban Rebel Girl, a pro-Castro drive-in epic, and created a lot of nasty headlines before his death in 1959. The western Massachusetts connection? Aadland lived in Springfield in the late Sixties as she pursued a supper club singing career. Although one interviewer believed "a single girl couldn't settle down in a small town like like Springfield," Aadland said that "at my house Springfield swings." Aadland's whereabouts today are not known.

Okay, so that one is not unlike Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. Here's the real thing.

My good friend Dave Mackie once told me of an illu-

He was shortish, and oddish, and brownish, and mossy, and he spoke with a voice that was sharpish and bossy: Springfield's Theodore (Dr. Seuss) Geisel.

the activities of celebs with for-real local roots such as Uma Thurman, John Shea, Paige Turco, Taj Mahal,



ERROL FLYNN



continued on page 8

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minating moment in his high school career well over twenty years ago. As he was sitting in a class in a long-gone Classical High in Springfield, he noticed that among the graffiti carved in his ancient desk was a name. "Timothy Leary . . . 1938" read the inscription. Much to Dave's surprise the fact was later confirmed that indeed one of the founders of the counter culture had been a graduate of Classical High.

Many people in Springfield didn't realize Leary's connection with the city until he died and the Union-News dutifully hunted down some of his high school classmates who all had good things to say about him. Unlike Dr. Suess, the most famous Springfield native son, no one in officialdom seems too comfortable with Leary's legacy and there's no talk of a Leary memorial here. Too bad, it might pull more people off I-91 than an IMAX theater on the riverfront.

We all know about Emily Dickinson's and Robert Frost's connection to Amherst, but what about William Cullen Bryant, the poet who made his home in Cummington? Or the fact that Moby Dick author Herman Melville was a resident of Pittsfield? While horrormeister H. P. Lovecraft was practically a recluse in his native Providence, a trip to Monson to visit a huge boulder that had been the site of colonial church services gave him inspiration for some of his stories.

Look back into old newspapers from twenty-five years ago and you'll find the Paramount Theater in downtown Springfield had a different name. Known as the "Julia Sanderson Theater," the performing venue had been re-opened and named as a tribute to Twenties and Thirties Broadway and radio star Julia Sanderson who hailed from

Springfield. The theater later reverted to its original name.

Next time you're in a video store, check out such classic musicals as *Born to Dance*, or *Broadway Melody of 1940* and you'll see another Valley girl, Eleanor Powell. The beautiful and athletic dancer was a native of Springfield and was a star at MGM. She was married to actor Glenn Ford for a number of years and by the end of her life she turned her energies to religion.

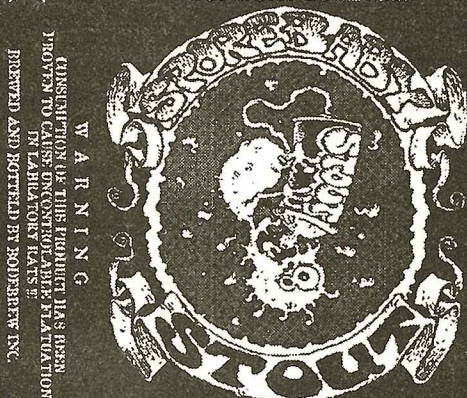
What about dead Presidents? Northampton was home to Calvin Coolidge, the Vermont-born lawyer who was mayor of Northampton, governor of Massachusetts and then President.

Lawrence O'Brien, Kennedy family supporter, postmaster general, head of the Democratic Party, and commissioner of the National Basketball Association, was another Springfield boy. His father had a tavern where the Springfield Civic Center now stands and he received his law degree from Western New England College.

So cut this story out and carefully fold it into your bill-fold for quick reference the next time some wiseacre from Connecticut or New York yaks about nothing ever happening here. And remember, this list will grow really impressive when in another twenty-five, or thirty years some of today's famous western Massachusetts folks head off to the big Happy Valley in the sky.

Classical high: Timothy Leary attended school in Springfield.

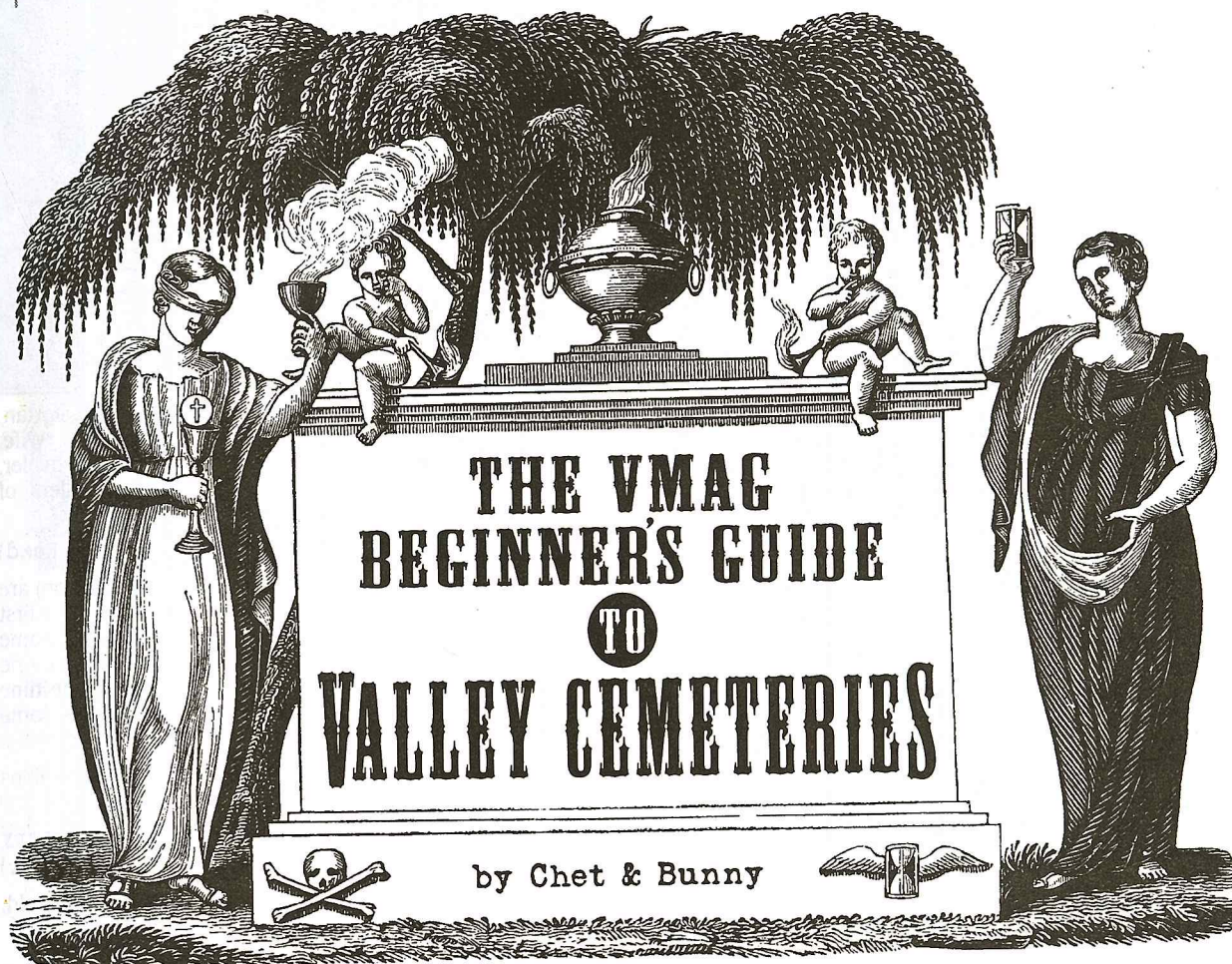
CHAMPION BREWMASTERS
WORLDWIDE AGREE
ON ONE THING...



IT'S A DIFFERENT KIND
OF SMELL!!!!!!

beer label by Eric Talbot

www.v-mag.com



CHAPTER ONE: AMHERST, HADLEY, NORTHAMPTON

"And the world of the dead, like a continent adrift, will move farther and farther away from the world of the living."

-- Edgar Morin,
L'Homme et la Mort dans l'Histoire, 1951

Chet: The shining moon, dead oak trees, there's nothing quite like a late night walk through a cemetery in the autumn. There's that certain stillness, that remote calm, of being in a twilight realm both separate from and a part of the adjoining community. We the living tread with hushed footfall upon the dead and in a sense stop living a bit ourselves.

Bunny: I hate it when you wax pathetic. Cemeteries are cool because they like museums. The most democratic of museums: all aboard, y'know?

Chet: Yeah but unlike museums, cemeteries more often than not don't come with guided tours or pamphlets or maps or anything that helps you to get around and learn a bit about the pieces — the gravestones and memorials and the lives they denote.

Bunny: But they oughtta though. Which is what this is all about. Just a beginner's (because that's what we are)

guide to the cemeteries up and down the Valley. We'll try to do this on a quarterly basis, hitting various towns and cities. In this issue we cover Amherst, Hadley and Northampton. So get out your street maps (and let us know what we've missed).

AMHERST

West Cemetery (in the center of town, off Triangle Street; behind Charlies)

Probably the most heavily visited of area cemeteries due to Emily Dickinson's being buried here in the family plot. Located centrally and surrounded by a wrought iron fence. ("Her body, dressed in white, was placed in a white casket with violets and ground pine over it.")

To the left of the Dickinsons is a stone written in Russian and opposite Emily's is one carved in the shape of a tree trunk. About thirty or so feet south on a small rise is a stone (in front of the Washington Monument-like stone of Perez Dickinson) the name of which is long weathered away but whose epitaph still clearly reads:

Readers behold as you pass by.

As you are now so once was I.

As I am now so you must be.

Prepare for death and follow me.

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continued from page 7

Walking around the cemetery you'll note a lot of familiar local names: Hastings, Boltwood, Warner. You'll also see far too many stones that have been knocked over or broken. Slate stones seem to weather best of all.

There are civil war vets, some who died of their wounds, others who survived and returned to town. Charles Thompson, Henry Jackson and other mid-nineteenth century members of Amherst's African-American community are buried here as well. So is one Charlie Brown.

Wildwood Cemetery (off Strong Avenue)

Aptly named, Wildwood Cemetery is just that: a cemetery in the midst of wild wood and hills, where the older (and a small bit of the new) portion of the cemetery melds



into the natural canopy of trees, bushes, wildflowers and fallen leaves. Strikingly beautiful and one of our favorites.

Lots of Amherst college presidents and professors

(botany, astronomy, philosophy, Latin, Greek, etc.) and squirrels. Many of the gravestones are formed out of natural rough stones and thereby further the wild nature of the cemetery.

Geologist and naturalist Edward Hitchcock is buried here. So is Ozzie Klate, the creative fourteen year old.

North Amherst Cemetery (north on East Pleasant)

Flat and for the most part rather modern (yawn). More than a few Amherst cops are buried here amongst the Puffers, Eastmans, Joneses, and Kelloggs.

Two of the more interesting graves: Eliphalet Spear and the tomb of Peter King. Spear because he was a veteran of the War of 1812. King because he lived from 1757-1855 (!).

HADLEY

Hockanum Cemetery (47 south just before the South Hadley line)

Small unassuming cemetery with several nice honeysuckle trees. A handful of graves from the 1700s.

Includes the quite busy Clifton Johnson and wife Anna

Old Hadley Cemetery (Old Cemetery Road)

Many of Hadley's founders (John Hawks, Peter Tilton) are here, as well as a memorial to Nathaniel Dickinson, the first settler of Hadley (in 1659) and father of the Dickinson name in New England. Here too can be found John Webster, one of the first settlers of Hartford, Connecticut and one-time governor of that colony. (Many of Hadley's settlers came from Hartford after being dissatisfied there.)

Look for Captain Moses Porter who was slain by Indians on the morning of September 8, 1755.

North Hadley Cemetery (north on 47 across from Lake Warner)

Don't miss the long skinny entranceway. Small, old, well-hidden, with great old trees.

Includes Thomas Gerry and Alice Smith, a couple instantly killed in an auto at a Hadley railroad crossing in 1910. Certainly must be amongst the first to go out this way.

Other Hadley cemeteries include: Plainville, St. Bridget's and the Holy Rosary.

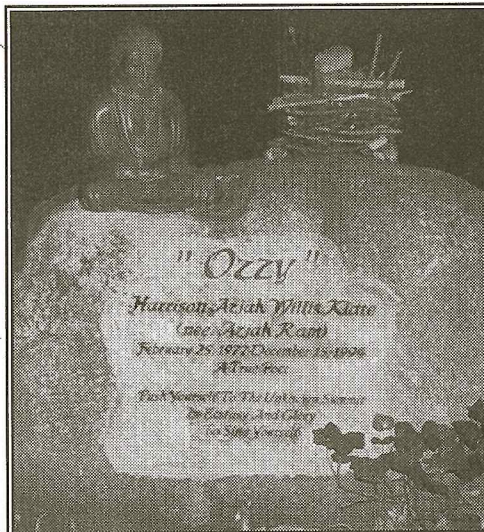
NORTHAMPTON

St. Mary's Cemetery (Bridge Road)

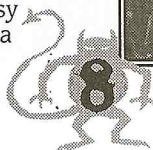
Sprawling cemetery spanning the very old to the freshly lain. Many of the oldest stones belong to Irish immigrants (of which there are many), most of whom note their counties of origin.

Established Northampton families like the Ryans, Reardons, Tobins and Whalens.

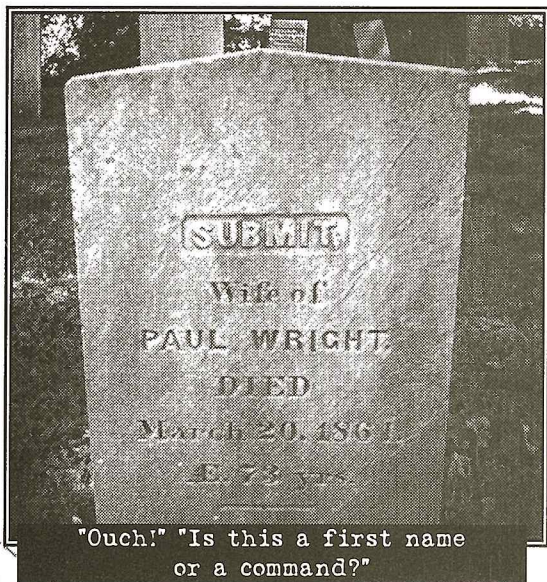
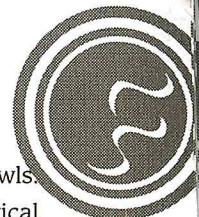
The image of the Virgin Mary is ubiquitous and often beautifully done.



Ozzie Klate: "Push yourself to the unknown summit; in ecstasy and glory; to sing yourself!" But watch out for sister morphine.



V-M-G



"Ouch!" "Is this a first name or a command?"

Bridge Street Cemetery (Bridge Street (Route 9))

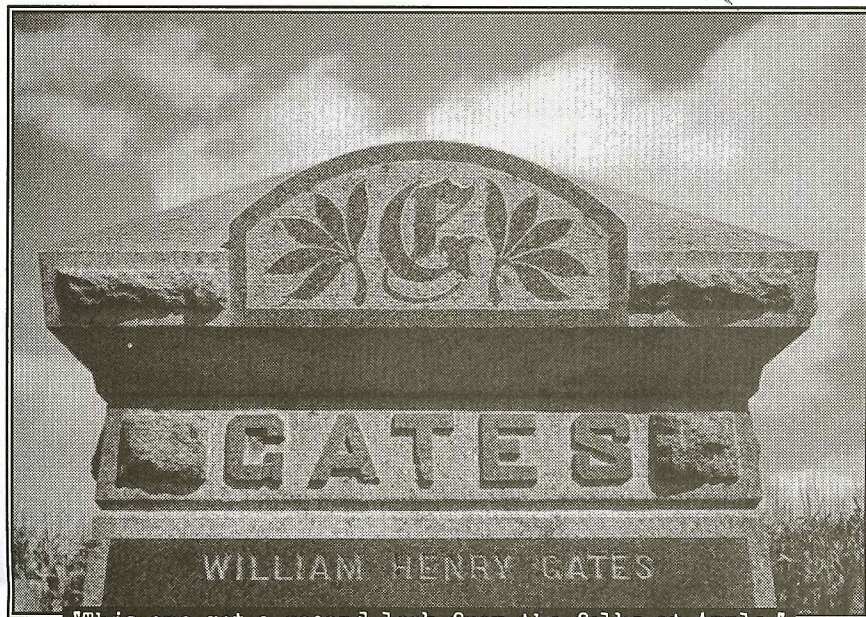
More sprawl but a more interesting sprawl than St. Mary's, particularly the eastern half with its tombs amidst towering pines.

Patience Miller, the first woman physician in the US, is here, somewhere. So too is Sally Maminash, "The last of the Indians here," and Sarah Gray, "A colored woman by those who experienced her faithful services."

Look for Caleb Strong, a governor of Massachusetts and Isaac Chapman Bates, a senator.

There's a memorial to divine firebrand Jonathan Edwards, and another to Seth Pomeroy, revolutionary war hero.

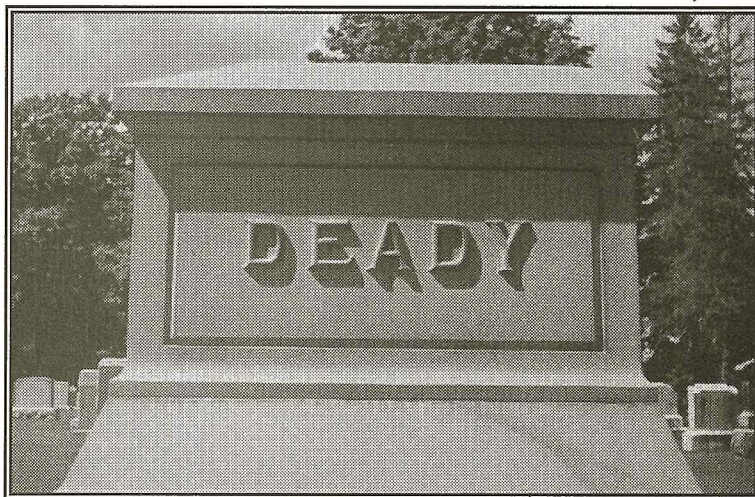
A wonderful cemetery to get lost in. Especially at night.



"This one got a second look from the folks at Apple."

If you go there after midnight listen for Great Horned Owls.

(Note: Marie Panik of the Northampton Historical Society informs us that there is a turn-of-the-century map of the cemetery at the NHS, listing stones by last name.)



"Yes indeedy."

Hebrew Cemetery (North King Street (Route 5))

In two sections separated by a brief woods of tall pine. Spacious and very neat but too bad about the constant vroom of the Interstate 91 traffic that borders the cemetery on the east.

Jewish families (August, Livingstone, Cohn) going back to the 1800s. Note the kids' section to the left upon entering the northern half of the cemetery.

Spring Grove Cemetery (off Mountain Street)

The melting pot of area graveyards. Greek, Arab, Puerto Rican, Irish, all finally getting along. Although very modern, some of the stones are creative if somewhat cheesy and have a real sense of individuality.

Recent murder victims Sherry Morton and son Cedric are on the left as you enter, a childhood shrine of sadness.

Cemetery rules are posted and strictly enforced: "No dogs, violets, or rose bushes."

But apparently witches are allowed. Look for the out-of-the-way resting place of Mary Parsons (whose story is briefly noted in the Ask Mr. Smarty-Pants column elsewhere in this issue).

WITCHES



V-MAG

NAMING THE BABY:

First names seen on old
gravestones or; NO MORE
TIFFANYS.

Asenath	Mehetable	Lovina
Mirick	Septimus	Cephas
Zenas	Haddasah	Achsah
Salmon	Eliakim	Keziah
Genalvin	Jerusela	Ora
Benoni	Orsamus	Persis
Thankful	Roswell	Tryphena
Increase	Clesson	Medad
Asahell	Emmons	Zebina
Albin	Silas	Naum
Orre	Zilpha	Rodolphus
Mather	Celestia	Azubah
Manton	Dorus	Nye
Manzor	Zera	Huel
Gussie	Alpheus	Kelita
Sidna	Electa	Erastus
Herta	Gustia	Mercy
Samson	Kunigunda	Clarinda
Wealthy	Jerusha	Tryphosa
Sardis	Elam	Alpheus
Glimina	Luman	Quartus
Elphalet	Esek	Achah
Xiffie	Orange	Noadiah
Asaph	Submit	Huldah
Justus	Sophronia	Supply
Hettie	Alpha	Lavina
Zadoc	Zeruah	Jabez
Amaziah	Climena	

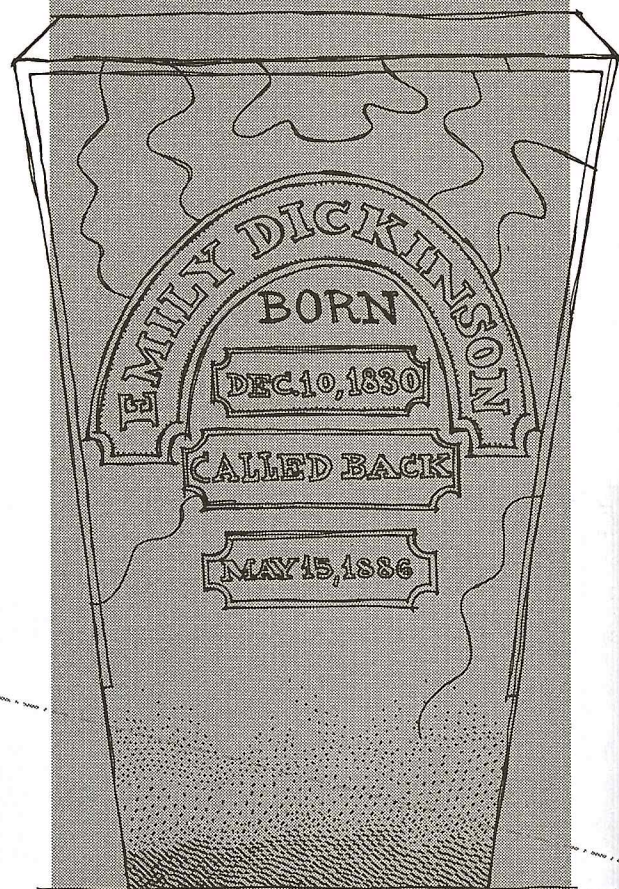


illustration by Benjamin "Azubah" Spencer

WITCHES



The VMag Budget Guide To Post-Mortem Care 1997 Western Massachusetts

A burial permit was also required for the transportation of a dead body across town or city lines making it illegal for people other than funeral directors to bring a dead body to a state where caring for your own dead is legal, like Vermont. Taking care of your own dead was not an option in Massachusetts.

ESSENTIALS

Direct cremation, direct burial, donation of one's body to a medical school and caring for your own dead are all less expensive alternatives to the standard American funeral. Unless you plan ahead it can be difficult to dispose of a dead loved one through alternative means for fear of looking like a penny-pinching ghoul. Imagine laying this bombshell on your inlaws:

Husband: "Hello, John. Yeah I've got terrible news, Missy died last night. No, there is no need to rush up from Florida. No, no no no, it's not a problem. The boys from the state medical school just picked up her body. I was thinking of having a memorial service for Missy. How's the twelfth around three-ish for you and Dotty?"

Indeed, a very tacky situation. To avoid such ugliness it is important to make sure your closest relatives and friends understand your post-mortem wishes.

CARING FOR YOUR OWN DEAD

Until last year state laws were interpreted that allowed local Boards of Health to issue burial permits only to licensed funeral directors or embalmers. Since a burial permit is needed for the lawful burial or cremation of a dead body, only funeral directors could make such arrangements.

by Jim Zalesky

LET'S GO DEAD!



After queries from local Boards of Health about the issuance of burial permits to people other than funeral directors, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health determined that it was legal to issue burial permits to people other than funeral directors. On August 19, 1996 the DPH published guidelines for taking care of your own dead.

DOCUMENTS AND FORMALITIES

The DPH encourages people caring for their own dead to "plan carefully and communicate in advance with any facilities and agencies that may be dealt with (such as the hospital, hospice, nursing home, local board of health, crematory or cemetery) to ensure no difficulties will be encountered due to confusion about the law."

Here is a run down on the paperwork that must be completed while taking

care of your own dead. Before moving a dead person a death certificate must be obtained and signed by a licensed physician. A registered Nurse Pronouncement of Death Form (R-312) can be used to initially move the remains, but a death certificate signed by a licensed physician still must be obtained. Once a signed death certificate is in hand a body can be transported within city or town limits before a burial permit is obtained. For example, a corpse can be transported from Cooley Dickinson Hospital to a home in



Northampton.

The dead body should be transported by a vehicle that is suitable to carry the size of the box (the coffin or casket) necessary to contain the dead body and preserve its dignity. Be prepared though; nursing homes and hospitals usually want the corpse removed immediately, no matter what time it is.

The MDH suggest that a burial permit should be obtained as soon as possible, preferably within 36 hours. Burial permits are issued by the local board of health or the town clerk. The burial permit must be obtained from the town in which the person died, even if the body is to be cremated or buried in another town. A completed death certificate must be submitted to the agent in charge of issuing burial permits before a burial permit can be issued.

BURIALS AND CREMATIONS

If your deceased loved one wished to be cremated then an additional document from the medical examiner must be obtained in order to rule out any foul play (for once a body is cremated, most, if not all, evidence of a possible crime is destroyed. The crematory will arrange for the examination. Storage of the dead body can be arranged with the crematory until the examination. Cremation of a body cannot occur until 48 hours after death. The waiting period is in order to allow for any information pointing to any possible foul play involved in the cause of death to surface.

Cremation reduces the body to four to seven pounds of ash and bone fragments. The bones should be ground to eliminate bone fragments if they are to be scattered. Scattering of ashes is legal in Massachusetts. There is no legal requirements for an urn. Anything from a decorative coffee can to a pot made in pottery class will work.

In Massachusetts, a body can be buried in a board of health approved cemetery immediately after all the necessary paperwork is completed. Most cemeteries will not allow you to dig the grave or fill it in, so notify your cemetery ahead of time to ensure the grave will be ready for burial.

COFFINS, CASKETS AND URNS

A coffin is a rigid container that is used to contain human remains. It has rope handles; if not, two boards can be slid underneath its width so that it can be lifted and carried carefully by four people.

A casket is an expensive coffin usually made of exotic wood, steel or semi-precious metal. The interior of a casket is usually lined with crepe, velvet or silk. Most come with a pillow and casket bed. It has handles and an ornate exterior. Any claim by a casket salesman that a casket will last forever and/or preserve the dead body inside indefinitely is a lie. He is also breaking federal law by making such a claim.

An urn is any container you can get your hands on. It is used to store cremated remains.

COST

The Boston Globe reported that the Eternal Flame Crematorium of Burlington, Vermont, charges \$550 for cre-

mation services.

Area cemeteries charge \$1000 on average to open and close a grave. Most cemeteries require a grave liner which adds an extra cost of around \$400. The grave liner is a cement structure that encases the casket, preventing the heavy earth above from crushing the casket and leaving a depression on the surface.

The city of Northampton charges \$20 for a burial permit and \$5 for each death certificate. Additional death certificates may be required in order to claim death benefits.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Memorial Societies are non-profit organizations that offer their members information that will help them plan a simple, dignified alternative to a traditional funeral. They provide information on direct burials and cremations, caring for your own dead and for leaving anatomical gifts (donating your body to science.).

Memorial Society of Western
Massachusetts, Inc.
P.O. Box 2821
Springfield, MA 01101
413-783-7987

REAR DIFFERENTIAL

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Every month VMag hopes to excerpt passages from a new or in-progress book by a local author.

Appropriately enough, the spotlight this issue falls on Deerfield author Stanley Wiater, whose latest book, *Dark Thoughts: On Writing, Advice and Commentary from Fifty Masters of Fear and Suspense*, is being published this month as a trade paperback from Underwood Books. The price is, of course, \$13.

Wiater is a widely published cinerateratologist* and observer of popular culture. He has interviewed more major horror and dark suspense authors, filmmakers, and artists than any other living or undead writer. His first collection of interviews, *Dark Dreamers: Conversations with the Masters of Horror*, won the Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement. Other collections include *Dark Visions: Conversations with*

ADVICE AND COMMENTARY FROM
FIFTY MASTERS OF FEAR AND SUSPENSE

INCLUDING:

CLIVE BARKER
RAY BRADBURY
NEIL GAIMAN
STEPHEN KING
DEAN KOONTZ
ANNE RICE

Dark Thoughts On Writing

STANLEY WIATER

don't want that for ourselves we have to find ways of doing these things directly. And so I try to say, "Look: pin the shadows to the wall first! Get rid of the dinosaurs and tyrannosaurs — and all those other monsters and ghosts and skeletons in your subconscious. Open Pandora's Box! Let out the horrors!"

Those are the first truths you know.

CLIVE BARKER

Everything is hand-written. Always has been and, I suspect, always will be. I don't own a typewriter or a word processor.

It frees me from not thinking in the technical sense of writing. I don't think about putting in a new piece of paper or a new ribbon; I don't think about the machine's hum or any technical process at all. I enter the "dreamscape" I propose, and describe it. When I'm

The Dark Thoughts of Stanley Wiater and Friends

the Masters of the Horror Film. He has also published short stories, and edited short story anthologies such as *After The Darkness*, and *Night Visions 7*. Not surprisingly, he likes to dress all in black.

The following excerpted quotes from *Dark Thoughts* are culled from beneath such choice chapter titles as: *The Function and Importance of Unpleasant Truths, Shocking Advice, and Sex and Death and Other Unspeakable Concerns*, amongst others. Following the excerpts is a short interview with Wiater.

STEPHEN KING

It's just that people have to have this stuff. You need it — like a little salt in your diet.

RAY BRADBURY

I think all of us start in darkness.

I try to encourage young writers to face up to their hostilities and murderousness. A lot of us were raised incorrectly, and we're supposed to be ashamed of our feelings, and ashamed of our destructiveness. We should be, if we take a direct object and go out and destroy it. Because we

by Daphne Hoey

doing my best work, it has the feeling of journalism. In my mind's eye, I'm seeing something very clearly, very strongly, and I'm simply communicating what I'm seeing in the most direct manner possible.

That describes the first draft. The second draft then becomes much more about the way the material is shaped on the page. It becomes a question of refining vocabulary, of refining syntax, and so on. So the hand is there, working away in this very simple manner, in the very first way we learn to put things down: a pen and a piece of paper. I started writing when I was four, and it's certainly served me well ... so I see no specific reason to change it now.

ANNE RICE

For me, [Queen of the Damned] was the first book in which I really used the computer as the pure poetic tool it is capable of being. Because what the computer enables you to do is range back and forth across your work, and bring it up to your standards very easily.

So even my smallest dissatisfactions, things I might have put up with if it had been typewritten, I was quickly able to boot up on the computer and change. So that's what I mean by pure and poetic: the computer really enables you to get exactly what you want to

FEATURE



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get. There's really no physical barrier anymore between you and your vision. If you can get it into words, you can really create what you see.

On the typewriter, I don't think that's true. You reach a point where you have this big, ponderous draft, and even to make minor changes in early chapters would mean making a mess, losing control of pages, having to retype. You're dealing with the industrial revolution; you're dealing with a mechanism, with labor ... and all of that's swept away by the computer; there's very little between your mind and what you're putting down there. There's really no excuse for not writing the perfect book. You're no longer making the mechanical compromises that move it away from poetry. I see poetry as meaning language at it's very finest, and it's most intense and most compressed. And you're able to get that essence with a computer.

STEPHEN KING

Number one: you think you can do it. You think you have the talent to go over the top and earn your living that way. In a way, you feel that's what God meant you to do, you know? You don't feel satisfied with what you're doing because you know that's not what you were meant to do, you know? I won't say I've lead a grim life, but it was — and still is — sort of a humdrum life. It isn't any big deal. I don't go out and ride around in a limousine, sniff cocaine with a babe on each arm.... But it's fun — you can go and get away from all that shit. And it's escapism. It's the same reason why people watch TV. But this is like "mind TV" or "mind movies."

The other thing that was always in play with me was I was convinced — deeply convinced — that somewhere, deep inside me, was a money machine. Waiting to be turned on. And that when I found the dials and the combinations, the money would just pour out.

It was never a question of I felt I had anything to prove to anyone else. But in a way, with those early [unpublished] novels, I felt like a guy who was plugging quarters in the machine with the big jackpot. And yanking it down. And at first they were coming up all wrong. Then with the book before *Carrie*, I felt I got two bars and a lemon; then with *Carrie* bars across the board — and the money poured out. But the thing is, I was never convinced that I was going to run out of quarters to plug into the machine. My feeling was, I could stand there forever until it hit! There was never really any doubt in my own mind. A couple of times I felt like I was pursuing a fool's dream or something like that, but they were rare.

DAVID CRONENBERG

What really interests me is the way human beings create their own environments, and also the way they rationalize themselves into a situation that's obviously totally insane and yet it somehow still seems rational. To see human trying to figure out who they are and why they are is what fascinates me.

CLIVE BARKER

Writing about the unholy is one way to write about what's sacred.

DAVID CRONENBERG

For me, it's really talking about morality. We're really talking about not being infinite. It's an existential truth, it's very raw and real. It's a very basic one, which is often lost sight of with all the layers of cultural persiflage and complexity. I think we are really just talking about the mind that doesn't see why it shouldn't be infinite and eternal, and a body that tells you right from the beginning that you are very definitely finite and time bound. I really think it is the tension between those two things that is the subject of horror.

So that's why you get that incredible variety in horror, because given that morality is the real subject of horror, there are an infinite number of approaches you can take to that subject.

JOE R. LANSDALE

It's very easy to offend — but it's not easy to offend deeply.

GRET WILLIAMSON

There's very little difference in giving the reader an erection — and giving him an erection of the spine. There's got to be more to it than that.

ANNE RICE

I feel horror fiction is very erotic. People have written really brilliant essays on that subject. It's absolutely inherent in vampire material: the drinking of the blood, the taking of the victim; all of that is highly erotic. It's an echo of the sex act itself. Since the Middle Ages, people have referred to the orgasm as "the little death." So the connections are there. But when I'm writing these novels, it's not thinking consciously about that: I'm just imagining I'm a vampire.

ROBERT BLOCH

Writing about vampires doesn't make me a blood-sucker; writing about homicidal maniacs doesn't mean I'm a maniacal murderer myself. Intellectual curiosity is a far cry from obsession.



STEPHEN KING

I told a story ... at a convention, a mystery convention. And we were on a panel about fear. There was myself, and there was Robert Morasco — who did *Burnt Offerings* — and there was Janet Jeppson who is Isaac Asimov's wife and who is also a psychiatrist — a clinical psychiatrist. So you know why she was there. And that shows where they come from, when they set that panel up!

Somebody in the audience said, "Did anything ever happen to you in your childhood that was really horrible?" And I told a story that I thought would satisfy them. I mean, it isn't anything I remember, it's something my mother told me. She said I was out playing one day with this friend of mine. I was about four. I came home, deadly pale, and I'd peed in my pants. And I didn't want to talk. She asked me what happened, but I went upstairs and closed the door and stayed in my room all afternoon. She found out that night that this kid I had been playing with had been run over by a train, okay? I can remember her telling me that they picked up the pieces in a basket. A wicker basket.

I don't remember anything about it; the chances are very good that by that time he had wandered off on his own somewhere, and then I wasn't anywhere around. There's a small chance that maybe I did see it happen, maybe the kid chased his ball onto the tracks or something.

So I told this story, and said, "I don't remember it at all," and immediately what Janet Jeppson said was, "And you've been writing about it ever since!!!" The whole audience applauded — because they want to believe that you're twisted!

WES CRAVEN

People who criticize horror films are not acknowledging that part of life, or that part of themselves. I firmly believe that every human being has the capacity for madness and wildness in them, and horror films express this — I think — in usually a very harmless way.

I don't think of horror films as instigation [of violence in our society]; I think of them as reflections. In general art is like that. It's funny, because art is always the first thing that is attacked. I think this is because the arts reflect events so truly, it's frightening. Horror films often reflect a truth that is too unpalatable for the society at large, especially for the political leaders, to be really comfortable with. Like it or not, we live in a lethal world. From what I can see of our culture and civilization, it is shot through with wars, and murders, and tortures — a truly great amount of terrifying horror. The threat of atomic warfare has been with us all our lives, to say nothing of germ warfare or biological warfare. People don't want to talk about this, but it's always there.

This is the amazing thing of denial that I'm continually struck by: is that people never mention the actual, real horrors of our world when they criticize horror films. They'd rather blame the horror film for influencing or "damaging" their children. But these are kids who are growing up with junkies in the fourth grade, you know? People are coming into their schools carrying AK-47 assault rifles, or sniping at them from rooftops. It's on the nightly news for these kids

to see. It's not like the horror film is introducing them to something that's never occurred to them!

The reason some of these kids walk around with Freddy Krueger dolls is the same reason that horror filmmakers are a little bit more relaxed about the terrors around us, because they are able to handle it, manipulate it, and call it their own for the moment. That's what a child does with a Freddy Krueger doll. That's what a teenager does with a horror film: they're somehow able to identify with it, and say "This I can handle. The person who I identify most with in this film probably will survive." Most horror films, no matter how devastating the action may become, are usually hopeful in the end, with the person you identify with most surviving.

DAVID CRONENBERG

Another question that one is often asked is why have things like trucker movies and Westerns all gone away and horror is still there? It's because horror is very much deeper than those other [genres]. It's right there at the primal level of human existence and therefore it is immune to trends and cultural upheaval. It of course shifts, but it is immune to being eradicated unless by censorship.

NEIL GAIMAN

There was one story I decided not to write [for *The Sandman* series]. It would have been sort of a little complement to "Dream of A Thousand Cats." It would have been a story about fetal dreams. It would have made a lovely story. Had it only been published in England, where abortion is not really an issue, I would have quite happily written it with no problems. But I chose not to write it, because I suddenly thought there would be some fifteen-year-old girl who's been raped and wants an abortion. And somebody would come up to her and show that story, and say, "How can you even think of getting an abortion after you read that story?" So I decided not to write it, which in a way tears me apart.

I know I had enough people come up to me and say that *Sandman* #8 got them over the death of their child, or the death of a best friend or someone like that. But you know that your stories can change people's minds, and hearts. So that was a case in which I decided to censor myself; I didn't want to be responsible for the consequences of a living soul.

INTERVIEW WITH STAN WIATER

The following interview with Stanley Wiater took place on September 13 and was conducted by Daphne Hoey and transcribed by Andrea Carlin.

Daphne Hoey: *I read your bio. So, like, what's a cinerateratologist?

Stanley Wiater: A term I coined to describe what I do professionally. You know, for when you go to a cocktail party



continued on page 18

new scene

and people ask what you do for a living. When you say "I'm a guy who never grew up from reading monster magazines and watching horror movies," you usually don't get that second drink. It simply means a person who studies terror in the cinema. Teratologist is a real term. I simply added the cine prefix. I've actually seen "cineteratologist" in print since my first publication of it. I don't know if it will ever become anything accepted in so-called "slanguage," but I use it because for about ten seconds it impresses people.

DH: Uh-huh. Well, you mentioned your youth so tell me, what were some of the defining films or horror media of your childhood?

SW: A lot of it had to do with going to the Calvin Theater and the Academy of Music back in the late 50's and early 60's when they had 50 cent matinees. I would go with my two older sisters when my parents wanted to get us out of the house — I guess as often as possible — so they would take us to these double matinees. It didn't matter what it was; musicals, comedies, Three Stooges, whatever, we would just go semi-religiously every weekend. As a kid the first movie that really changed my life was seeing *Gorgo* in February of 1961 at the Calvin Theater. I was one of those children who was hooked on dinosaurs, so the idea of actually going to see a dinosaur movie on the big screen in color in the front row was a defining moment in my life. It made me realize what I wanted to do; be involved with the fantastic.

DH: *Gorgo*? Did that precede *Godzilla*?

SW: It came after. *Godzilla* was released in America around '55. *Gorgo* is basically a British adult version of *Godzilla*. It's never been remade, nor have there ever been any sequels to it. But as I say, when you reach a certain point in your life ... it can be anything, a book, a movie, it can be a relative but sometimes if it happens at the right time it'll change your life forever.

DH: And that was it... *Gorgo*. Now horror monster movies at the time were very different than the horror movies of today. As the parent of a nine year old, how do you go about exposing or protecting your daughter from today's much more realistic horror movies?

SW: There's nothing really to protect her from because it's still ketchup. Today there's a higher grade ketchup on the screen but it's still ketchup. My daughter knows about plot lines and special effects and make-up. I don't just sit there and say it's make believe, I tell her exactly how it's done. Or we'll watch *Movie Magic* on the Discovery Channel and watch the making of *The Terminator* so when she sees *The Terminator* and if it would scare her as it would any kid, she also knows that it's all just special effects. Ketchup!

DH: What is the essence of horror?

SW: Horror is kind of an odd business. Horror basically deals with a physical revulsion and most people involved in horror are really involved in the terror business. If you ever were to look at some of the early interviews with Boris Karloff or Vincent Price, they were always saying "I don't make horror movies, I make terror movies." And it might sound like a fine line, but the truth is terror is there to scare the mind, to upset people psychologically. Horror is basically dumping a bucket of gore on the floor — that's a horror movie. The few true terror movies that really scare you are few and far between. I've listed a few for you...

DH: Are there any that have scared you? Recently?

SW: Recently, no. I really have to go back to 1979, to *Alien*. (And I'm speaking of mass market films not foreign films or obscure films.) *Alien* was one of the last films that I saw through and said, "This is great. I'm really afraid of what's going on and I don't know what's going to happen next."

DH: What's the most horrible thing you've ever witnessed?

SW: That's the odd thing. I've made a point in my life to steer clear of "reality" as much as possible. So growing up in Hadley and then going to school in Amherst then living in Northampton and then living in Holyoke and now living in Deerfield ... you can see I've traveled all over the world. There are a lot of horrible things that have happened in the Pioneer Valley — and continue to happen — but unfortunately on the days that I was outside I didn't see any of them.

DH: 95% of the interviewees in *Dark Thoughts* are male. What's up with that?

SW: So. 95% of the writers of romances are women. What's up with that?

DH: D'oh. So, do you believe in ghosts, demons, the supernatural?

SW: Absolutely, absolutely. The idea that we have only senses is very limiting and self-defeating for anyone who has a vivid imagination. I think that if anyone really woke up and said none of these things exist, it would also probably mean that there's no afterlife, no Heaven, no Hell, no ultimately no God, regardless of how you define God. If there is just me looking in the mirror knowing that at some point in my life I'll just be worm food, I don't think I could ever get out of bed again.

DH: So you do believe in some sort of spiritual continuity after death?

SW: Not in the sense of the traditional Heaven or Hell. Even though that's a great allegory for the idea of good being rewarded and evil being punished. Because, of course, you cannot have good without evil no matter how you phrase it. But the idea of spirituality goes with the idea that you have to think that there's something beyond the mortal coil because there isn't much here to brag about. If this reality is all there is, again, it's too depressing a thought to speculate on for too long.

DH: Too dark a thought. So, are there any other dark thoughts you'd like to leave us with?

SW: Just as I state in the book; to really enjoy the light, you first have to explore the darkness.



The Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Holyoke will have a group signing featuring seven horror authors, including Wiater and VMag contributor Steve Bisette, on Saturday, October 18 from 2-4 p.m. For the dark details call 413-532-3200.

Wiater's web site is located at www.alteredearth.com/wiater/wiater.htm.





ARTIST PORTFOLIO:

ERIC TALBOT

Interviewed by
Maggie Wolfe

Maggie Wolfe: So, Eric, why skulls?

Eric Talbot: Skulls are just very fascinating. Something about the imagery of a skull . . . the way it represents death, the way it represents something seemingly living on after death.

MW: Did you draw as a child?

ET: Yes, I did. The first memory of drawing I have was when I was in second grade when I did this big drawing of a horse that the teacher hung up for the whole year. I've always drawn. All through school. I never went out for sports or stuff. I always just sort of hid in my sketchbook.

MW: Did you have any artistic influences back then?

ET: Primarily Frank Frazetta, especially in junior high school. Frazetta is a renowned fantasy artist, an amazing painter in that genre. He did a bunch of early Dell paperback covers for the Conan book series. A lot of his best work has been collected in several volumes comprising The Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta.

Worth checking out. Another big influence was Heavy Metal Magazine. That's when I really grew serious about drawing. Also, seeing Richard Corben's work in 1984 Magazine made me realize I could earn a living drawing monsters.

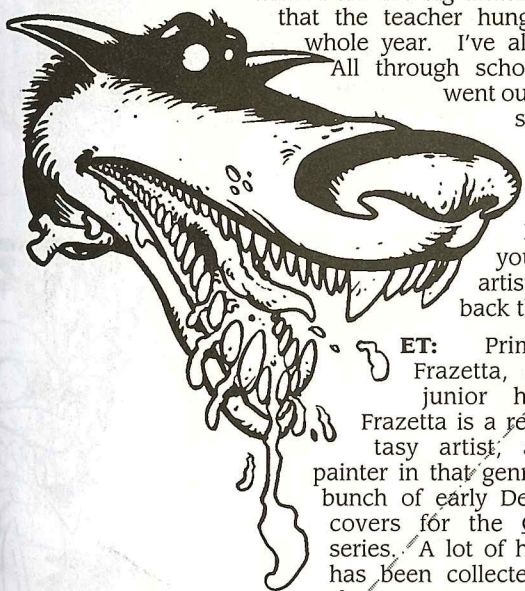
MW: What artists are you currently into?

ET: Now I'm starting to go into museums for the first time. I'm blown away by the painter John Singer Sargent. They just had a show of his work at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown. Unbelievable. Also Ryden, this artist who does all this funky tiki sort of stuff. I see his illustrations scattered throughout magazines here and there.

MW: What other things have influenced your art, or yourself?

ET: I like to draw with music on. I used to be really into the Misfits, the American punk band that was into horror. Their music really influenced me to get into drawing spookier stuff. More of the '50s

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Halloween sort of horror imagery; pumpkins, bats, skeletons. Not that demon from

hell sort of crap.

MW: You've shown me some recent oil paintings of yours....

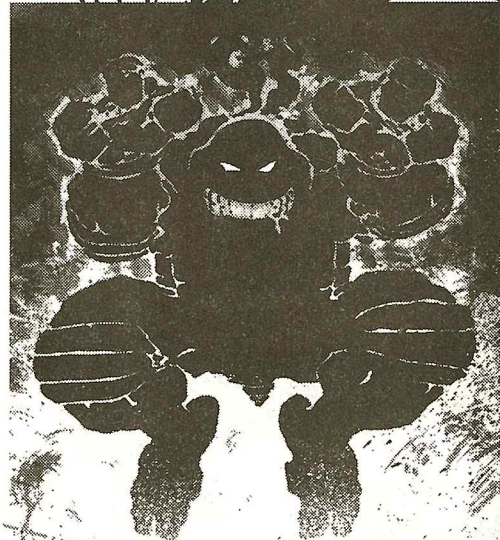
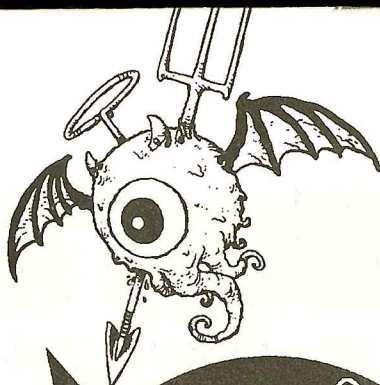
ET: Yeah, I've taken up oil painting, which I find to be a very challenging medium, unlike any other form of art I've ever tried.

MW: What sort of projects are you currently working on?

ET: I've been doing a lot of animation for CD-Rom projects. I've just finished doing the artwork for this enhanced CD coming out from the Jerky Boys, their fourth CD, on Mercury Records. So I've spent the last several months drawing goofy big-jawed, little-bodied, cartoony pieces; stuff unlike what I usually draw. The Jerky Boys are really nice people, really into open back-and-forth creative jamming. A lot of fun. The CD should be out around the end of October.

MW: Have they pulled any gags on you?

ET: No, not yet. But [laughing] they can be pretty harsh. Also, earlier this year I finished working on another CD-Rom project featuring something like 350 of my tattoo designs. It has a total of 2000 brand-new tattoo flash illustrations, kind of like a clip-art tattoo program. So, myself, in conjunction with a local company, Right Angle, put together about 15 artists, all of them from the valley. People like Raphael Rivera, Rick Veitch, Matt Smith, Mark Bode, Mike Dooney, Jim Lawson, Dan Berger. Everyone did a great job.



FEATURE





MW: How will it be marketed?

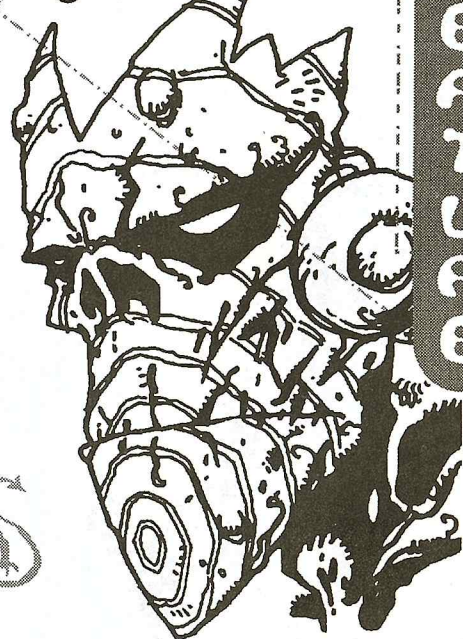
ET: It's called "Clip Art from the Edge" (no relation to The Edge tattoo shop in Enfield). Interestingly, a lot of the tattoo artists I've talked to are excited about it but a lot of shops don't have computers.

MW: Any plans for a hard copy of it?

ET: No but I'd like to. As artists we only gave up the electronic rights to our work so we could put together a book. If somebody wanted to spearhead it....

MW: Don't look at me. Tell us about yourself. How'd you wind up in the valley?

ET: I moved here in 1987 to work with the Mirage Studios guys on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It was a fun, profitable, whacky roller coaster of a ride. A lot of learning experiences, believe me. I learned a lot about business, a lot about growing up. You can never buy the experience that we all got out of it. About what happens when tons of money get thrown at a creative property. Like water and oil. Money always wins.



CLIPPING

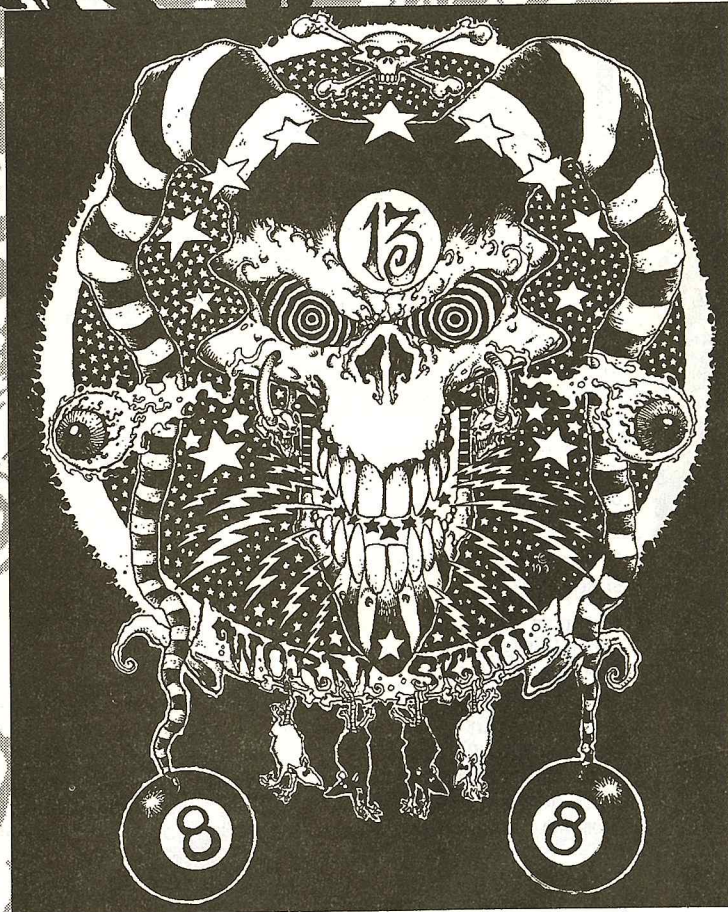
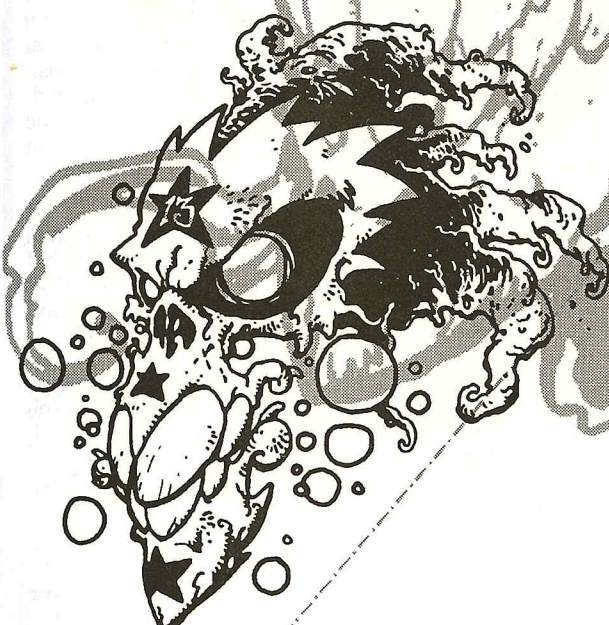
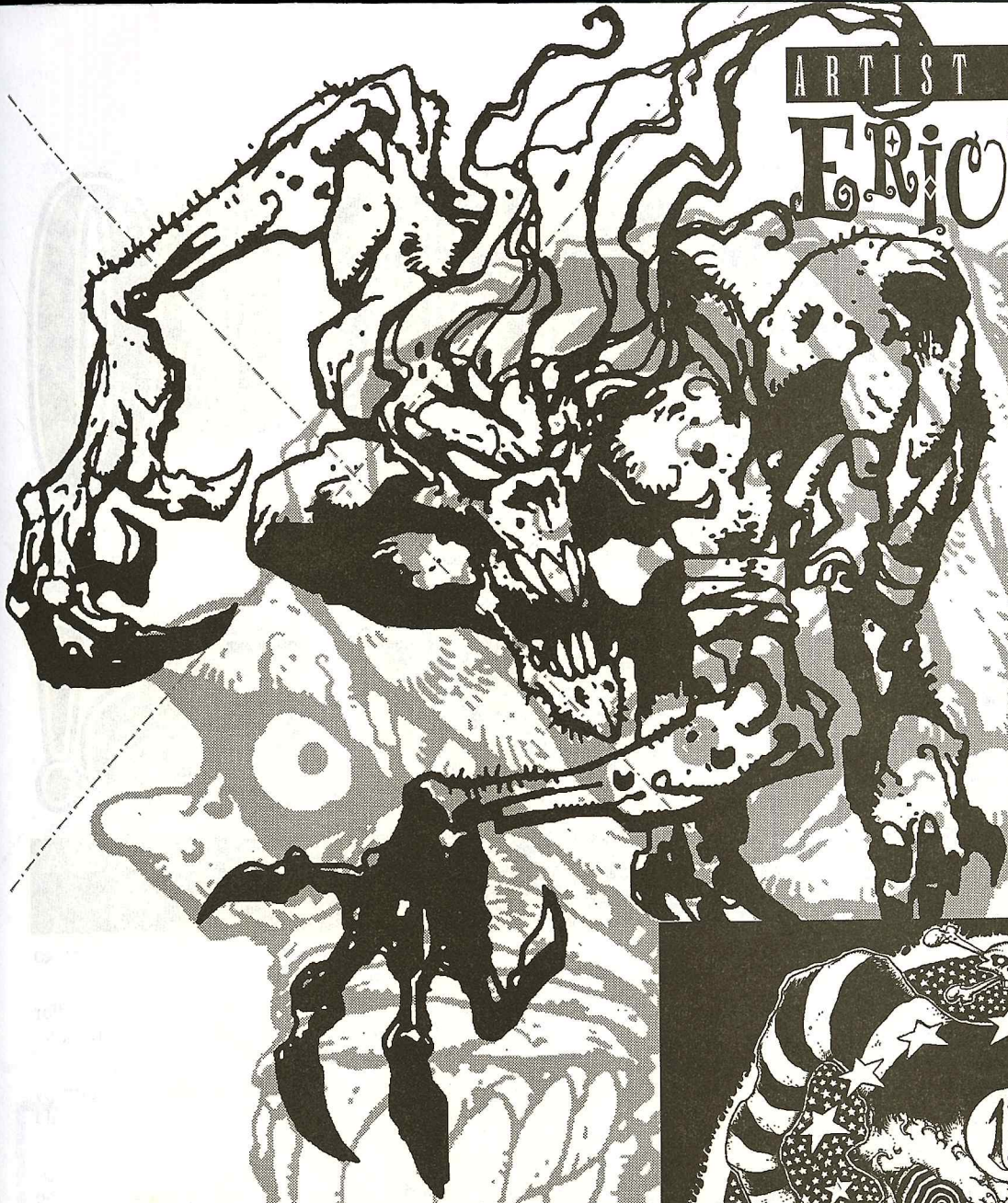


ARTIST PORTFOLIO:

ERIC TALBOT

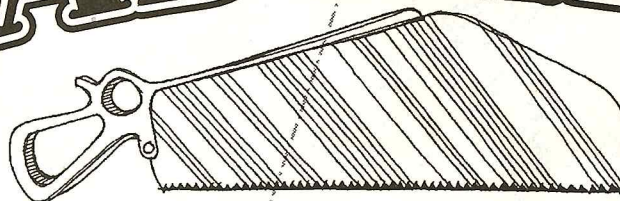


ARTIST PORTFOLIO:
ERIC TALBOT



V-MAG

DEAD MEN DO



SCATTERER BONE SAW

TELL TALES!

An Interview with Dr. Eleanor N. McQuillen, MD, MSA
by Stephen R. Bissette

Dr. Eleanor N. McQuillen's considerable expertise as a forensic pathologist cannot be overstated. Her credentials and experience ultimately earned her a lengthy tenure as Vermont's Chief Medical Examiner, overseeing state pathology procedures in the Green Mountain State that were laid nearly a century ago. (In 1898, the Vermont Attorney General was given the power to order autopsies, and the state's health lab was established. By 1900, the director of the Vermont Department of Health was required to perform medical-legal autopsies; local representation (selectmen or justice of the peace) dealt with local death investigations and autopsies were relatively rare.)

Retired from public office in 1990, Eleanor launched a forensic consultation firm with her husband James McQuillen, a neuropathologist. Northern New England is Eleanor's preferred beat, but she still enjoys working in Vermont, often with the professionals she nurtured warm relationships with during her public tenure. This interview was conducted on September 7th, 1997.

Steve Bissette: How many years did you have to put in schooling?

Eleanor McQuillen: Beyond the four years of medical school, it is currently a requirement that pathologists put in five years of training, just to be a hospital pathologist: that is, anatomic and/or clinical pathologists. Anatomic pathologists deal with the science of disease in surgical specimens and cytology (which is single cell analysis from a variety of sources), and in the autopsy, which is the total body analysis after death. Clinical pathologists deal with all the various labs in hospitals, generally -- anything from microbiology

(the pursuit of organisms that cause infectious disease), to blood banking, to chemistry.

There's a whole series of laboratories that you're familiar with if you've ever been hospitalized, certainly. At any rate, I started out that way, and was boarded in 1970.

SB: What conditions would necessitate an investigation by the Chief Medical Examiner? What type of death would prompt you to perform an autopsy?

EM: Let me tell you the second one first, because the autopsy has always been discretionary. The autopsy is done if the State's Attorney or the regional medical examiner feels it needs to be done in order to clarify the cause and manner of death. The law is quite simple and specific. The law basically places the law enforcement officer, the regional medical examiner, and the State's Attorney of the county of the jurisdiction where death occurs, in a team to make certain investigations and decisions.

If the regional medical examiner cannot determine the cause and manner of death from this examination and investigation -- which doesn't include a full autopsy, but does include an examination of the exterior body, and all of the circumstances -- if the cause and manner of death can't be determined, and he can't write a valid death certificate, then the State Pathologist is called and an autopsy is done. The body is referred to the State Pathologist. In those early days, it was done in funeral homes, or small hospitals. By the time I arrived, all the autopsies were being done in Burlington, and the funeral directors in the state were playing a very major role in cooperating with the system, and bringing the bodies in for autopsy.

SB: In making the decision to bring a body in for an autop-

illustrations by Benjamin Spencer

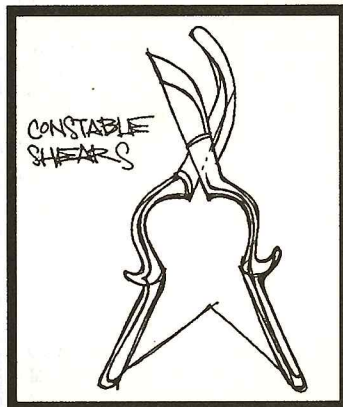
sy, what general prioritized list would you consider? What would you be looking for?

EM: I think the first part of the question you asked is really established in law: when a person dies from violence; suddenly when in apparent good health; when unattended by a physician; from suicide; casualty; while in a mental institution, or in a jail; or in the interest of public health, public welfare, or public safety, a death is to be reported to a medical examiner. So law defines the type of cases that have to be reported. Subsequently, guidelines that were written -- and that's probably what we, as we modernized, sort of reinterpreted, with changes in the environment -- those cases would be referred to a regional medical examiner and a law enforcement officer to make an investigation.

Now, that's a great team, because a medical examiner could focus on the medical aspects of the case, and trust that the law enforcement officer was an investigator who knew police science. Sometimes, their suspicions alone would be the sort of thing that they'd talk over and they'd say, "You know, I'm not really sure that this was witnessed, and this home wasn't secure, and even though you don't think there was an overt homicide here, maybe we ought to do an autopsy." And then the State's Attorneys were actually given the responsibility of control of the body. The charge of the body was virtually theirs, and they were the ones who made the final decision to release the body or to send it in for autopsy. And they still have that right.

SB: Once the autopsy is completed, do you put everything back into place?

EM: Most everything. There's been a changing pattern of behavior on the part of all pathologists. In the old days, there used to be incinerators in hospitals where organs -- not only from autopsy, but also from surgery -- could be incinerated to be disposed of. Times have changed. I think we have perceived the need of next of kin to know that their loved ones are buried with all of their organs. We also know that second autopsies may be required, and that it's a good idea to put everything back.



Now, there are exceptions: the brain is appropriately studied after fixation in formalin, which is the universal fixative we use for all tissues. The brain fixed whole in formalin for about ten days to two weeks is required for optimal examination. Not every case needs it, but when necessary that means that a brain does not always go back with the tissues if it is important enough to be examined later by a neuropathologist. Rarely, but

sometimes, the heart, being another organ of sudden death (the brain is, too) -- the heart may need to be examined by a cardiopathologist because I have not been able to find the pathology that I think exists, and therefore I want to ask a specialist to help me with that. Then that heart may not go back. But it's only for purposes of necessary future examination.

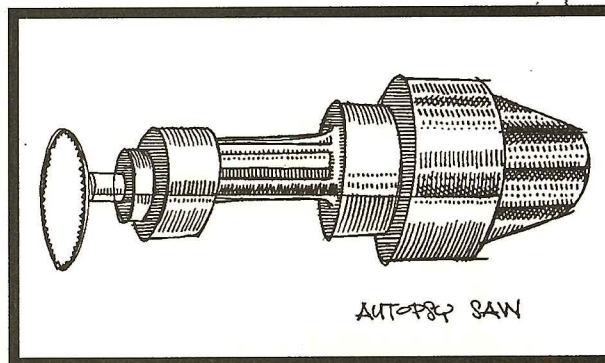
Then, of course, in some criminal cases, the State's Attorney will say, "Look, if this is manual strangulation, I

want you to save the neck organs," and we put them in formalin. Sometimes as evidence, you have to take certain specimens. We always take small pieces of all tissue for microscopic slides. But usually, everything goes back. In short, organs and tissues are returned with the body for burial, except when needed for further examination, when needed as evidence, and/or when needed for microscopic examination.

SB: When working with exhumed bodies, is there any point at which a body is just impossible for you to work on?

EM: Haven't found one yet. Obviously, when a body is reduced to ash and fine bony remains in a cremation, that's really difficult. But I have confronted the issue of perhaps a toxicology in those remains. I do know -- intellectually, at least -- sometimes you can still differentiate a poison even when cremation exists. Certainly, if I'm talking to a private person who wants to reinvestigate the death of a loved one, and find out it's a cremated body, I do confront them with

the fact that it may not be possible to do anything further. Most bodies are fine, and the ones that are buried after embalming are remarkably preserved, for years and years and years.



SB: Amazing. Do tapeworms or other parasites of the human body survive after we die? If so, how do you deal with them -- or do you?

EM: Certainly, organisms in us do survive after we die. How long they survive depends on how much they take from the human body in the way of nutrition and so forth to survive. Tapeworms aren't something I come across very often, but clearly maggots in the decomposition process, you know. They're flies and they have a life cycle: they lay eggs, they create pupae, and then ultimately maggots, and then they grow up into flies again. Those can be extremely disagreeable. It is part of the job, and there's a science to this as well, but I have never been a great enthusiast of entomology. But I respect the fact that it's just another side issue that contributes enormously to timing of death, and I think that's important.

SB: What's the worst thing you've ever encountered in your work?

EM: I guess probably it was a dismemberment in a high-speed pedestrian injury.

SB: Uhh --

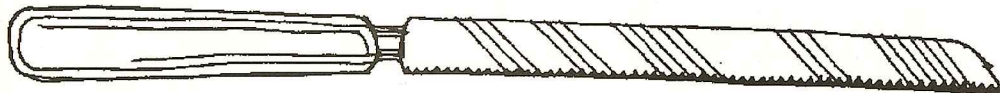
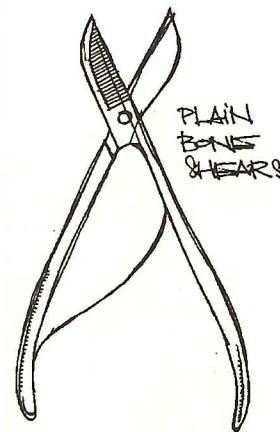
EM: Ya, obviously, this was one of those preventable things. I don't know whether it was the fact there was dismemberment, or the fact that it was yet one other alcohol-related situation with the driver being intoxicated and speeding, and then struck a pedestrian -- it bothered, I

continued from page 23 know, everybody. The State's Attorney was also on the scene, and he was pretty upset about it.

SB: What role does forensic geology play in your work [determining where a crime may have been committed by soil or trace minerals found on or around a body]?

EM: As a matter of fact, I can remember one outstanding case. I'm not sure I can identify all aspects of it, but I can very distinctly remember that there was soil on the body of the deceased. The body was found outdoors, but we wanted to match the soil for exactly where it had occurred: was the body dragged, and all that sort of thing. I do remember that we all recommended that it be referred to a geologist, but I'm not sure -- I think it went to the FBI first, as a general forensic laboratory. But that was an outstanding case in which we well could have used a geologist as a consultant. We have loads of consultants. We have a forensic odontologist in the state, we have an anthropologist with the University of Vermont who is wonderful, we have a forensic toxicologist who has monitored our work of accuracy and efficiency for many years.

an autopsy assistant, and one with great experience that I worked with for years. We would proceed by photographing the body as it came in: dressed, undressed, cleansed of all body fluids that might mask injuries. Everything was photographed. Then the autopsy proceeded with an examination of the total body, including the brain. When we were done, we had a series of pathology findings, ordinarily, that would give you the cause and manner of death, which was key as far as the medical-legal autopsy went. We'd also have a whole series of pathologic findings that were available if asked by the next of kin, so that they could also talk to us or receive a copy of the autopsy report and learn what disease processes their loved one may have had. Obviously, our key service was to the police



METACARPAL SAW

SB: Once you've decided an autopsy is necessary, what is "standard operating procedure?"

EM: Let's start with the scene. You get a call, very often from the medical examiner or from the police at the scene. They'd describe the case, they'd tell me why they felt they needed an autopsy, and I would generally at that point actually schedule a time. I would say, "Fine, this afternoon at three o'clock, I'll meet you." The funeral director would bring the body in, in the anticipation that they could bring the body, after the autopsy, right back to the area from which burial was going to occur. We tried to make this efficient, so that the poor funeral directors were not making two trips and travelling all over the state.

They, by the way, are great unsung heroes as far as I'm concerned. They do a very splendid and professional job of retrieving bodies, sometimes from very difficult locations, bringing them in for autopsy. Sometimes they'd stay with us and just wait for the body, sometimes they'd go out and do some errands around town and then they'd come back. Sometimes I'd have to say to them -- not often, but sometimes I'd have to say, "Look, this case really puzzles me, I cannot release the body; I'm going to have to ask you to come back a second time." Now they were reimbursed for their mileage; I don't think they were reimbursed handsomely by any means, but they were reimbursed for their time.

So then they'd bring the body in, and we would be ready and waiting, usually with the knowledge of what the case was all about and how we were going to handle it. We would then proceed. There was always

an autopsy report so that they were constantly following the flow of potentially criminal cases.

You know, that whole list that I mentioned from the law -- we were doing a lot of non-criminal cases. A lot of them, because Vermont doesn't have a lot of criminal cases. We were really, at that point, properly located at the Health Department because we were identifying whole series of causes of deaths that were potentially preventable. We began to really stress the preventability of some of these types of deaths. Classic of these might be the alcohol-related ones: but for alcohol, a lot of people would be alive today. They either died of natural consequences of alcohol disease, or they died from the traumatic injuries sustained during intoxication. Some of them killed themselves -- suicide is related to alcohol, and probably most of our homicides had alcohol on board.

SB: You found alcohol to be a more destructive force than, say, cigarette smoking or --

EM: Right. I think probably we would see more of the alcohol than the cigarette smoking deaths, where the hospitals would see the destructive effects of the cigarette smoking. It was generally a disease issue, and it was a disease that involved the lungs and the heart mainly. It was the doctors seeing these patients before they died who would recognize the natural history of cigarette-related diseases. Because they were attended by physicians, we might not see those.

SB: Were there cases in which you never determined a cause of death?

EM: There are some. I think that every jurisdiction has



probably anywhere from one to two percent, and maybe even up to five to six percent, of undetermined manner of death. You might know what the cause was, but you wouldn't necessarily know the manner. The difference between cause and manner is that cause of death is a multiple, they're everything. There's a whole huge book of codes for cause of death. Manner is: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, or --when we don't know -- undetermined. Sometimes it would be hard to decide what manner was. Very often it would take the team approach: we'd get ahold of the investigator, and we'd query him. The classic example that I always point out when I teach the medical students is the person who uses drugs recreationally may also have mental disease. When he takes a drug, and he dies of an overdose, is he an accidental drug overdose, or is he committing suicide with his drugs? If [the drug content]'s way high, you get a real message: he obviously took way more than he should have. There's always the potential for a homicide, if someone's slipped him a real hot shot, and this is particularly related to heroin and morphine, then he might have unwittingly taken something that someone else gave him and that person might be responsible for the death.

Homicides were fairly infrequent, and we certainly left that to the investigating police and the State's Attorney. But sometimes we'd have real dilemmas about this. We'd always talk it over amongst the team. We didn't always necessarily sit down, which is something I always liked to do, but we'd at least make phone calls, and we'd make a decision about what we were going to call it. Leaving a case as undetermined also might leave it "red-flagged" in the file. It was never quite closed under those circumstances.

The other cases that were really tougher, I think, was when we didn't have a cause of death when we were all through, or we didn't have one that we recognized. I do respect the fact that we gain knowledge with every year, and what we

didn't recognize twenty years ago may be recognized now. It wasn't that we were stupid twenty years ago, it was just that it wasn't an acknowledged pathologic finding at that stage of the game.

Unfortunately, those really tough ones -- mainly natural deaths -- were those disease processes that cause death physiologically, like an arrhythmia of the heart, when there really wasn't significant heart disease. There are people that are born into families where congenital arrhythmias, familial arrhythmias, are

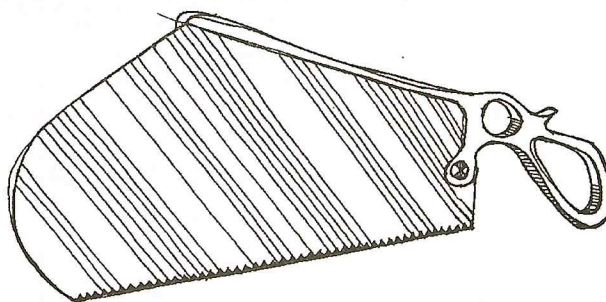
known. We'd have to go back to the family and query them very closely about whether anyone else in the family had died this way. Sometimes you'd get a clue that there was a familial arrhythmia, and sometimes a member of the family would have been diagnosed with an identifiable arrhythmia and we'd have to clear all non-natural evidence and all criminal evidence out, and then we might say, "Okay, I think

this is a natural death, and it's probably related to this familial arrhythmia." But, things like epilepsy don't leave a marker, necessarily. If you have a seizure, you might die in it, but unless it's witnessed by someone, there may be little or no clue to the fact that you've had that seizure as the cause of your death. We'd end up with an unknown cause. They're always troublesome.

SB: Are there any possible serial killing cases in Vermont that remain unsolved?

EM: You know, there isn't as far as we know. But identifying serial murder is always essentially getting enough cases that look alike to be able to suggest that it's serial -- they're alike

ROUND TIP BONESAW



enough to be recognized. In the old days, it used to be arsenic poisoning, and very frequently it was the wife who killed multiple husbands. Invariably, the first husband wouldn't be recognized, because the death would probably be considered natural. They were usually older people. Then, if she moved into another state, the second one wouldn't be suspected. It wasn't until maybe the third or even the fourth husband died that people would become suspicious. You never really know when you're dealing with serial murder, unless some guy or gal -- but usually a man -- walks into the police station because he's been brought in on a speeding ticket, and is so overwhelmed with guilt that he just spits it all out and gives a confession. Otherwise, we wouldn't recognize it.

There have been a series of decomposed female remains that occurred on either side of the Connecticut River, over the years, in which a knife was used to cause death. We always felt they probably were serial.

SB: That was never resolved, I take it?

EM: No, I don't think so. A book was written about it [*Shadow of Death: The Hunt for a Serial Killer* by Philip E. Ginsburg, 1993, Scribner-MacMillan, New York].

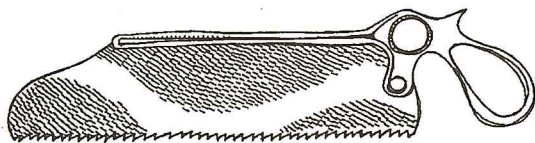
SB: What's the strangest case you've ever been involved with?

EM: I think the strangest case was probably the one of a man who died in his home with a variety of skin -- small, blunt impact injuries, but no real cause of death when we did the autopsy. It was one of these situations where we knew when he was last alive, because there had been (apparently) a telephone call. We knew when he likely died, because subsequent telephone calls from family to him were not answered. The scene showed quite a bit of disarray, but when the autopsy was done,



continued from page 25 there really wasn't any significant injury that you could blame it on. You usually in those cases worry a lot about "asphyxias": was there someone who gained entry to the house and asphyxiated him in such

a way that there were no findings? That's a possibility, but in the long run it was a situation in which we



ROUND TIP BONESAW

felt that he had been an alcoholic, and had been abstaining, and had a withdrawal reaction, in which you can die. This was the best we could do.

It was most unusual, and most disturbing. It was a scene I went to, even though a great medical examiner was at the scene, he just felt uneasy about it. He called me; we spent a long time with the police and the State's Attorney. After the autopsy, we spent a long time with consultants who looked at the case for us, and finally felt that it was a natural death, but that it was probably related to the withdrawal of alcohol.

SB: In your own beliefs, is there a light that doesn't go out? You're dealing professionally with interpreting what are literally people's last moments of life. What happens after we're dead?

EM: Is there an afterlife? I'm a Roman Catholic, and I feel very strongly that there's an afterlife. Death, to me, is a transition that we're all going to go through. Unfortunately, I see some that didn't need to happen at the time they happened. But I also see sort of a salvation in some of these. Some deaths are inevitable. Many deaths are preventable.

I guess I adopted the attitude of a public health physician that this person's death should not go unnoticed, if it lends to preventing the death of another. I find it a little bit easier to accept the fact that that person has made a major contribution, and the death is not forgotten. You know it's not forgotten, because families don't forget. One of the things I'm always impressed by is the number of people who annually reflect on their loved one's death in the newspaper. To me, that's very moving.

SB: Now that you're dealing more with the private sector, how do lay people react when they find out what you do for a living?

EM: [Laughs] Well, you know, I think there's always a reaction. The number one reaction is, well, I'm a woman. One person stated it wonderfully. He said to my husband, "I met your wife for the first time the other day, and by gosh, she just looks like somebody's mother!" [Laughs] Jim laughed, and said, "Well, she is, she's five people's mother." The other thing is, I'm quite short, I'm five feet tall. At this stage of the game, I'm 62 years old and I'm plump, and I just defy the image. Occasionally, when a lawyer knows who I am, he's using me for that image alone. Which is okay, I don't have any real problem with that. I usually let him know that I'm still thinking and I can intellectualize, but that's sort of amusing.

SB: How do you react to how people in your profession tend to be portrayed on television and

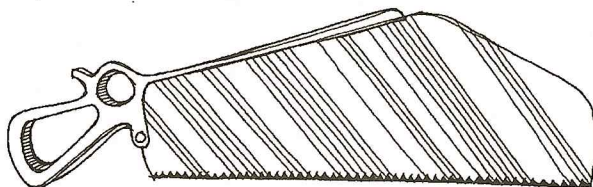
in the movies?

EM: Oh, and books -- oh, my God, everybody's got a book. There's a lot of literary license, and I think that Quincy M.E. was a delightful series on television, but I think it portrayed the work of the medical examiner as being too easy. Not all of us have a Sam in our life, and we really work awfully hard and spend long hours doing the job ourselves. In order to expand the series, Dr. Quincy became the doctor to all people with all problems: he became a sociologist, he became an expert in law, he became an expert in a lot of things that forensic pathologists simply aren't. But it obviously is for the purposes of portraying death investigation, and that was the first series that brought death investigation to the minds of the public.

We, ourselves, do not market ourselves well enough. People should know who we are, and what we do. In fact, I have always been a great promoter that we should have an open house, annually, in our laboratory, the morgue (it's called the autopsy laboratory, professionally). Absent all bodies, people should have a chance to see what's there, to see what it like, because I think their imaginings are far worse than the reality. I think we should be educating people about it.

SB: What do you like most about your job?

EM: There's no question about the fact that it's exciting. It



SATTERLEE BONE SAW

teaches, every day, a little something. I like that. I like being a public health physician, I like dealing with medicine on that basis. I thoroughly enjoy working with the professional police and lawyers -- not just prosecutors, but when I was in my public life, it was mainly prosecutors -- whom I've worked with. They teach me something, they listen to me respectfully, and the exchange of information is something that I thoroughly enjoy.

SB: What do you dislike most about your job?

EM: Oh, I become very frustrated with the repetitiveness of preventable deaths. The fact that we just don't learn to stop it.

SB: We are human beings.

EM: Right. [Sighs] We are human beings.



Dr. McQuillen's recommended reading:

"Autopsy," by Stephen A. Geller,
Scientific American, March 1983.



Since we haven't yet gotten ourselves on the freebie/review mailing lists of any video companies and since we wanted a buncha video reviews for the first issue we thought it would be fun to have a handful of movie enthusiasts submit their lists of "Top 5 Horror Movies." This is what we got:

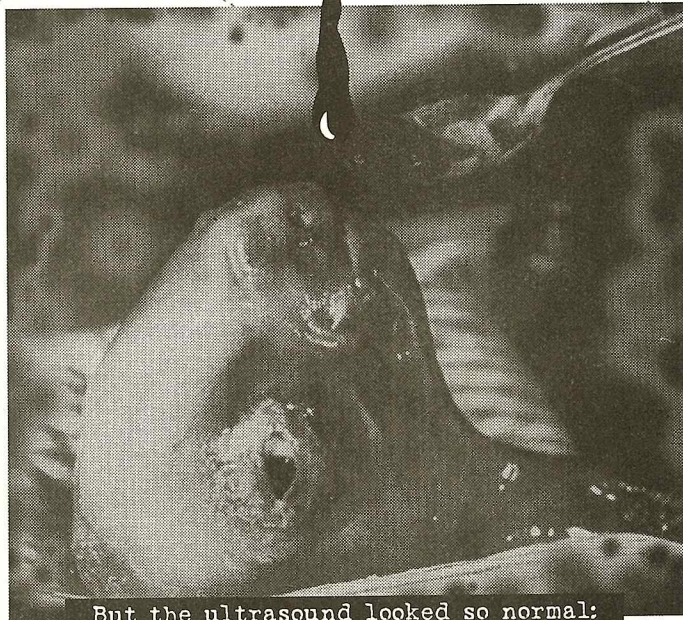
THE DARK, MUSTY HOLE OF HORROR

By Punco Godyn

1. **Black Sabbath** (1964) - Mario Bava. That's all I really need to say about horror movies. I grew up watching stuff like *The Planet of the Vampires*, *Kill Baby Kill* and *Baron Blood*. Saturday mornings on Channel 9 out of New Jersey. It's left me permanently fucked up and thankful for the fucking. Bava made some of the creepiest movies put to film: his sense of color and editing were completely original, even if he did use the shock zoom too much. Then again, some of his shock zooms were scary too. **Black Sunday** (1962), in which we are introduced to Barbara Steele as a reincarnated vampire is probably one of the best gothic/vampire films ever made. But I've been particularly chilled by *Black Sabbath*, a trilogy of terror hosed by Boris Karloff. Two stories are a little uneven, but the film shines with the last story, in which Karloff plays the patriarch of a family inflicted with a kind of incestuous vampirism. It's supposedly based on a Leo Tolstoy story.

THE TOP 5 HORROR MOVIES

A HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE TOUR OF THE GENRE



But the ultrasound looked so normal: the baby from *ERASERHEAD*.

2. **Trilogy of Terror** (1975) Another anthology picture with three stories, all starring Karen Black, who I feel has a kind of strange sexiness. A voluptuous horror, if you will. Something about those eyes that don't quite point in the same direction, I think. Like all three stories in this movie, though most people will tell you to fast forward to the last part, "Prey", about a Zuni fetish doll that comes to life and chases Ms. Black around her tacky apartment, keening. I was able to make my college roommate shriek by wiggling a butter knife under the bathroom door and going "aiaiaia" after we watched this movie. Some video versions only have this last part: avoid them. A sequel was made: it's got to suck.

3. **The Creeping Flesh** (1972) Scientist Peter Cushing discovers the skeleton of a caveman so evil that it grows flesh when you add water. For some stupid reason, Cushing shoots his daughter up with a serum made from the creature's blood and she goes on a Jack-The-Ripper style rampage, meeting up with a psycho who looks like MTV veejay Matt Pinfield. This is an amazing, frightening and shrill feature that manages to combine a whole soup of horror elements: it goes down a few alleys you wouldn't expect. You got Cushing here, so you gotta get Christopher Lee: he's got a juicy bit as Cushing's brother, the corrupt owner of a mental asylum. Great twist ending featuring the monster intent on getting his finger back.

4. **Horror Express** (1972) What was it with these guys? Cushing and Lee in another costumed period piece, this time aboard the Trans-Siberian Express (apparently the producer had a train model left over from the film *Nicholas and Alexandra* and wanted to get some use out of it). They're a pair of competing scientists (again); Lee is bringing home the body of a "missing link" ape-man he found.

continued on page 28

WICKED



continued from page 27

However, it turns out that the beastie is actually an alien, and when it looks at you, your eyeballs turn into bleeding hard-boiled eggs and you become a zombie. There's a great ranting Rasputin-like character who goes on the expected rampage. There's a romance for Cushing with a Polish princess, and Telly Savalas is oh so Telly as a Cossack.

5. Shriek of the Mutilated (1974) This 70s artifact boggles something, but I'm not sure if it was necessarily my mind. The mystery of the Yeti finally gets explained in upstate New York: it's a conspiracy involving a college professor, a cannibal cult, a mute Indian named Laughing Crow, and shag carpeting. Features the hit song "Popcorn". The people in this dress a lot like they did in my high school, so it gives me an extra warm feeling.

6. The Tinger (1959) Gimmick meister William Castle hit pay dirt with this exploration into the nature of fear. It turns out terror is actually a giant earwig that lives at the base of your spine. Vincent Price shoots up LSD to get in touch with his inner tinger, and has an Oscar-worthy freak-out scene. Somebody else's tinger goes on a (you guessed it) rampage in a movie theater, and there's the story of how Castle hooked up the theater seats with joy buzzers that went off for this "play within a play". Scream, scream for your lives!



FIVE HORROR FILMS THAT CHANGED THE LIFE OF G. MICHAEL DOBBS

In chronological order...

1. Journey to the Seventh Planet... This Swedish-made Sixties sci-fi cheesefest scared little third-grader me to death with its monster...a giant brain with a single blood-shot eyeball!

2. Psycho... In my high school film class, the teacher ran the shower scene for us without any preparation and them made us watch it backwards!

3. Evil Dead... My foster daughter Chau and I watched this film together, and it was a true bonding experience.

4. House of Long Shadows... A remake of the venerable thriller Seven Keys to Baldpate, starring Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, and John Carradine. It's a horror fan boys dream.

5. Petey Wheatstraw (a.k.a. The Devil's Son-In-Law)... Rudy Ray Moore, the Godfather of Rap and one of the baddest men alive, is a comic who gets killed by his competition, goes to Hell and makes a deal with old Scratch himself. Required viewing for any real American.



BILL AND DANA: THEY'RE ALTOGETHER OOKY

DANA: Bill, we're supposed to tell people our top five horror films.

BILL: Yeah. So?

D: So put on some clean underwear and let's get to it. I guess "horror" implies something that scares the crap out of you.

B: What? You mean like being in the "12 items or less" line with 13 plums?

D: Yeah, or having a big spider lay eggs in your open mouth while you sleep.

B: I think I understand. OK...hang on. Let me slip into some Super Ultra Hungry Man Huggies and we'll get it on.

D: Now that's real scary.

B: I'll say. Unnh.....umph.....ung...ah-h-h...there. OK. Let's see. Ah....my top five horror films. Well, the first film that inspired evacuation for me was The Amazing Colossal Man. The prospect of a giant bald guy in a diaper really disturbed me wicked bad when I was a callow eight year old. Come to think of it...it still does. Wait...I'm a giant guy in a diaper! Yikes I've become everything I fear and hate. Well, at least I'm not bald.

D: Ooooh, big scary man scare widdle Bee-wee. I suppose you were frightened by Mr. Clean and the Jolly Green Giant as well.

B: Gee. Thanks for the compassion you heartless dung beetle. I'll tell you something else that freaked me out, Superman versus the Mole Men. More radioactive bald guys but this time they're little itty bitty guys who are basically misunderstood. They scrambled up from deep inside the earth. I don't like the idea of mute little guys in turtle-necks burrowing around down there. Manholes still make me nervous.

D: Yeah. When I was little the movie The Hellstrom Chronicle scared the living Christ out of me. The idea that insects would inherit the earth and there was nothing man could do about it always bothered me. I especially didn't like the scene in which this sleeping guy is attacked by ants. They went in his mouth before he woke up. The bottom line is: I don't want bugs inside of me!!

B: That's not a horror film. It's a nature film for crying out loud. Ooooh-oooh icky bugs! Eee-yew cooties! Naw...if you want a nature-gone-amok movie that's really bowel moving you should talk about The Birds. Alfred Hitchcock transforms pretty birdies into a vicious gang of eye-pecking killers. Gruesome gulls, sinister sparrows, fearsome finches. Every time I see some

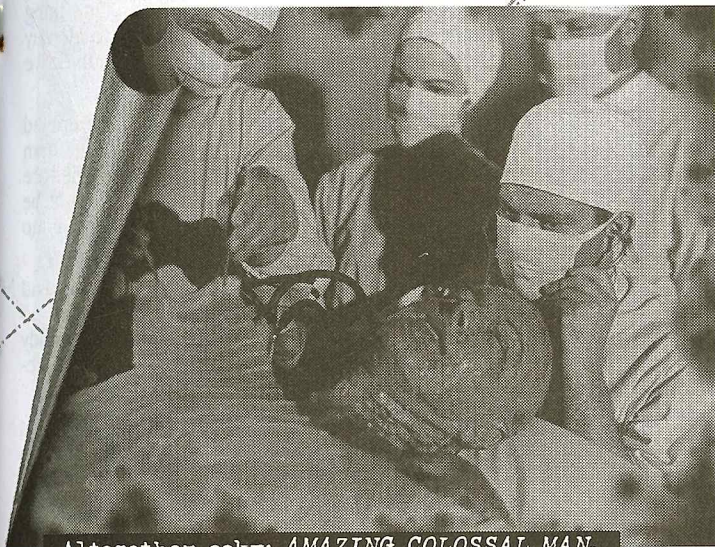


REAL AMERICANS: Author Mike Dobbs hanging with Rudy Ray Moore(of PETEY WHEATSTRAW



tiny tweeter savaging a suet basket my blood runs cold. Suet is meat, man. I'm full of suet! Br-r-r-r.

D: You know that birds are just little flying dinosaurs. And dinosaurs are scary! (Except for Dino and Barney.)



Altogether ooky: **AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN.**

I agree with you, Bill. I've always had the fear of being asleep and having some angry starling peck my eyes out. It's a wonder I can ever go to bed at night. Staying on the theme of nature going totally bonkers, the movie *Jaws* scared some digested food products out of my body when it first came out. I wouldn't take a bath for months...because of sharks...and water...not because of my soiled under-pants...actually I took a shower right away.

B: I'm sure you did, stinky. You're absolutely right about *Jaws*, though. It is Steven Spielberg's masterpiece. He certainly knew how to exploit that instinctual fear of being a vulnerable edible morsel suspended over a malevolent murky vastness. I won't go to Club Med because of that movie. Well, that...and Jimmy Buffet fans, they really creep me out, too. You know what's another primal fear kind of thing that prompted potty for me? *The Exorcist*. Every time I hear squirrels capering in the attic I start crossing myself like a nun on meth and I also start drawing a holy water bath.

D: I won't eat pea soup to this day. Another devil movie that dampened my trousers was *The Omen*. Now it doesn't seem scary at all. In fact, it makes me laugh. Out loud. As I get older, it gets increasingly harder for me to be frightened at the movies. What makes you pee your pants these days, Bill?

B: Hiding from people in my closet. Wait...is that what you meant?

D: No. I'll run some movies by you real quick and you give me your gut reaction. OK? Ready? Here we go...*Silence of the Lambs*.

B: Bugs, beans and some very extreme braces. Creepy but it didn't make me leak.

D: It made me hungry for human flesh. How about *Night of the Living Dead* and all the sequels?

B: They were great. They were more of a hoot than scary, though. More like an "Ew-w gross" movie than a "Yow! Mommy! Mommy!" movie.

D: Scariest film ever made? Yanni: Live at the Acropolis.

B: Yow! Mommy! Mommy! How about any TV special featuring Doug Henning, David Copperfield or Michael Flatley?

D: But we digress. OK! Here's my top five horror films. The movies that truly frighten me nowadays all deal with true life crime and prejudice, the underbelly of human nature and the dark recesses of the soul. I consider them horror films because they truly do horrify. And they are: *The Thin Blue Line*, *Aileen Wuornos*, *The Selling of a Serial Killer*, *Blood in the Face*, *Paradise Lost-the Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills*, and *In Cold Blood*.

B: Right. All that stuff disturbs my centeredness something awful. That and the surgery channel. But when you get down to cases, the horror movies that really vexed me were the ones with kids or creepy kid-like creatures: *The Brood*, *The Village of the Damned*, *The Children of the Damned*, *The Bad Seed*, and the ooggiest and randiest of all-*Don't Look Now*. There are few things more evil than cute homicidal kids...cute birds...maybe.

D: That kid in Jerry Maquire really churned my stomach.

B: Exactly what I mean! And they all turn into these ugly teenage psycho sex deviants stewed in their arrested development. Look at Gary Coleman, Corey Feldman, Rodney



Spare the rod, spoil...**THE BROOD.**

Allen Rippey, Danny Bonaducci, Marjo Gortner and that hideous bag of wheeze who did the Oscar Meyer bologna commercials. Now, they make my colon cough.

D: I'm truly disgusted. And terrified. Excuse me while I go give birth to a monkey, tail first. Oops. Too late. D'oh!

B: That's why I recommend

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these Huggies. They may look goofy but you avoid those messy clean-ups after these reviews.

(Bill and Dana work at Pleasant Street Video in Northampton and host an irreverent cable access movie review show in which they often review movies that they haven't seen. It's wicked funny!)



STANLEY WIATER'S FIVE SCARIEST M O V I E S

Is it crazy to gleefully admit that I've seen literally thousands of horror films since I was five years old? In chronological order, here's five classic celluloid nightmares which may inspire in you some deliciously literal ones...

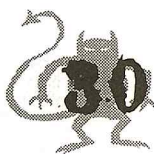
1. **Psycho** (1960) Probably the most famous horror movie (non-supernatural variety) ever made. The still taboo themes (incest, voyeurism, madness), explored in Alfred Hitchcock's vision of the Robert Bloch novel will never be bettered. Not even in its three sequels, combined, come anywhere near its power to shock.

2. **The Haunting** (1963) Based on an equally classic novel by Shirley Jackson, this tale of a group of psychic sleuths attempting—and failing—to investigate a haunted house is the ultimate in terror, without ever showing a drop of blood or a single ghost. The greatest film Val Lewton ever made.

3. **Repulsion** (1965) In many ways a companion piece to *Psycho*, except director/writer Roman Polanski uses the painfully lovely Catherine Deneuve to demonstrate that a lonely young woman is just as capable of going insane and homicidal as any man.

4. **Vampires—Daughters of Darkness** (1975) A Spanish production shot in England, this cautionary and contemporary tale of two beautiful lesbian vampires preying on stranded motorists is as passionately erotic as it is cold-bloodedly chilling. Unflinching and unapologetic, yet completely mesmerizing.

5. **The Tenant** (1976) Adapted from a magnificent novel by Roland Topor about a man having been driven mad by his neighbors, this remains Roman Polanski's most twisted vision of darkness. Not only did Polanski co-write the screenplay and direct, he also plays—all too convincingly—the suicidal title character.



FAVORITE HORROR FILMS

by Joseph A. Citro

It is difficult to isolate five "favorite" horror films from the hundreds I've seen and the dozens I love. One thing makes the choice a little easier: I've been asked to identify "favorites" rather than "best," so my judgement is subjective rather than critical.

To make the process more painless I have eliminated favorite films that, arguably, belong in genres other than horror. For example, two of my all time favorite movies are *King Kong* and *Jaws*, but strictly speaking these might be called "giant animal" films rather than horror. There is no element of the supernatural in either.

I have also excluded favorites such as *Psycho* and *Silence of the Lambs* as they are "psychofilms," with no preternatural component. Same for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *War of the Worlds*—great, but science fiction.

As much as I hate genre labels, I have, for the purposes of this exercise, confined my choices (and my definition) to scary films involving the supernatural. Even with such artificial restrictions the choice is not easy.

My favorites? Well, I guess they are the films that I repeatedly recommend with great enthusiasm. The films I keep coming back to. The ones I've seen several times and would eagerly watch again.



LOOKING FOR LOVE: SWM, tall, quiet, likes moonlit walks and thunderstorms, I'm not big on fire but I am a people person looking for...**THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN**.

So, in no particular order, my choices are:

1. **NIGHT OF THE DEMON** a. k. a. *Curse of the Demon* (directed by Jacques Tourneur, 1958) is a film about conversions. The main character and the audience evolve



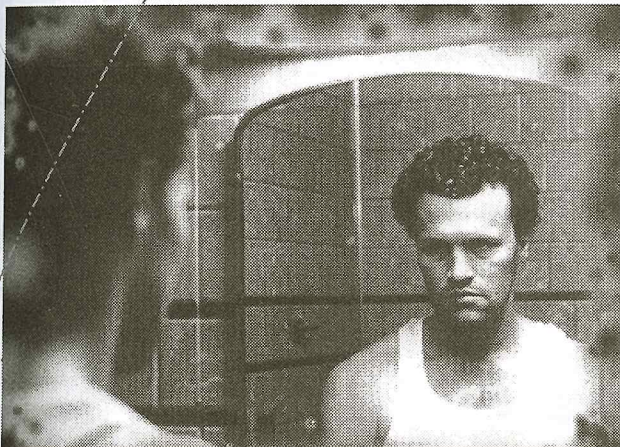
from doubters to terrified believers as the reality of preternatural danger becomes more and more convincing. It is not that we suspend disbelief only while the movie is run-

Lugosi are perfectly matched to the material. All of Lewton's remarkable films are fixed forever in my memory because of horrific scenes and unsettling images. There are several of both in *The Body Snatcher*, but the pace and ghastly imagery of its climax make one of the most horrifying episodes in film history. (It is difficult to explain why this is my favorite Val Lewton film. Close contenders are *Cat People* and *I Walked with a Zombie*)

4. THE HAUNTING — Robert Wise also directed this favorite. Released in 1963, some of the styles, dialogue, and pseudo-scientific jargon have not aged well. But if one can get past that, this is probably the most nerve-wracking haunted house picture ever made. Psychic investigators take up residence in a long-unoccupied haunted mansion somewhere in rural New England. One psychic's disturbed mind acts as a catalyst to release the house's pent-up evil. The resulting terror is almost painful. (Other ghostly favorites: *The Uninvited*, *The Innocents*, and . . .)

5. THE LADY IN WHITE — On one level my affection for Frank LaLoggia's modern classic is easy to explain: the film's world is similar to the world I grew up in: small town, Italian grandparents, loving blue collar parents, cronies interested in monsters and ghosts, all innocently played out against a nearly invisible real-life background of racial tension and horrifying adult crime. Writer-director LaLoggia so perfectly

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YOU LOOKING AT ME? : Michael Rooker in HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER.

ning, afterwords we're left with the unsettling notion that malevolent occult forces may well exist. This depth of experience would not have been possible in lesser hands. Charles Bennet's script is intelligent; Tourneur's direction is masterful. The villain — based on Aleister Crowley — is one of the screen's best. *DEMON* frightens because it attacks our beliefs and our sense of reality. (Related favorites: *The Exorcist* and *Pumpkinhead*)

2. BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) is by far my favorite Universal monster movie. For me its power comes from its insistence, right from the beginning, that everything is a little misaligned and abnormal. There is no point at which the viewer feels at ease, no comfortable frame of reference. Where is the action taking place? When? Why is there an ongoing sense of disturbed sexuality? Why are all the births — from Dr. Praetorius's alchemical homunuli to the monster's electrified bride — unnatural? Jame Whale's magnificent vision is a perverse nightmare — one that forces us to laugh even as we suffer. Visually magnificent, completely odd, totally unforgettable. (Same era contenders: *Frankenstein* and *Devil Doll*)

3. THE BODY SNATCHER (1945) — This time we know exactly where we are and why we're there: 1831, Edinburgh. Producer Val Lewton and director Robert Wise pay careful attention to period and historic detail making the grim reality of medical grave robbing all the more vivid. The supernatural element is ambiguous and therefore — at least to me — stronger and more compelling. Performances by Boris Karloff, Henry Daniell and Bela

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Pleasant St. Video



continued from page 31

recreates the 1960s childhood experience that one totally identifies with young Frankie Scarlatti (Lukas Haas)... as he's caught up with murder, ghosts, a benevolent madwoman, and a precious family friend who feigns love while plotting Frankie's murder. Strong stuff, but executed with intelligence, sensitivity, wit and an appealing gentleness of spirit (none of which lessens the razor-edged Hitchcockian suspense). I have probably watched this film and recommended it more than any other. (A second favorite modern ghost story is *THE SHINING* (the Kubrick version, not the lunkheaded TV mini-series).)



S. R. BISSETTE'S BAKER'S DOZEN

With almost forty years of obsessive affection for, viewing of, and studying horror movies it's damn near impossible to narrow my faves down to just five titles. In fact, I couldn't do it! So, here's my current Baker's dozen list. Bear in mind, I'd name thirteen others on a whim and depending on what day of the week it was.

D, 2), 3), George Romero's *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (1968), *DAWN OF THE DEAD* (1977), and *DAY OF THE DEAD* (1985): The ultimate apocalyptic American horror movies, one for each decade since the '60s. Romero is one of our finest storytellers; it's a crime that the current commercial cinema refuses to accommodate him.

4. James Whale's *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935): I love the classic 1930s horrors but this and *King Kong* (1933; more a monster movie than a horror movie and hence not on this list) are the jewels of the crown. Frightening, funny, fierce, heartfelt, and one of the best movies ever made, period.

5. Georges Franju's *EYES WITHOUT A FACE* (1958, aka *Horror Chamber of Dr. Faustus*): The French Grand Guignol tradition brought to the screen with breathtaking beauty, poetry and horror.

6. Mario Bava's *BLACK SUNDAY* (1960): A baroque black-and-white Gothic arabesque atmospherically photographed around the porcelain (and punctured) features of Barbara Steele. The first horror movie to really scare me — I love it like no other.

7. Ken Russell's *THE DEVILS* (1971): A lethal merger of Church and State conspires to knock the walls of the fortified French village of Loudon to the ground with a sanctioned witchhunt against Father Grandier (Oliver Reed). A delirious adaptation of the Aldous Huxley tract, still impossible to see in this country in its original uncut form.

8. Mario Bava's *BAY OF BLOOD* (1972, aka *Carnage*, *Twitch of the Death Nerve*, *Last House Part 2*): I can't possibly justify this title's presence here, other than to say it's the greatest "body count" horror movie of them all. I rushed to see it every time it played at the drive-ins (under a variety of titles). Ravishing Bava cinematography, an ever-escalating string of truly horrific murders (much imitated in the *Friday* the 13th series) to gain an inheritance, and a hilarious final shot. An unsung classic!

9. Nicolas Roeg's *DON'T LOOK NOW* (1973): Roeg's best films do not pass before our eyes, they explode and implode

V-MAG

LIFE

'In Cold Blood' is filmed on scene of the crime

NIGHTMARE REVISITED



In *Kubrick's Truman Capote* stands between actors who play killers in movie of his book

Filmed on the scene of the crime!

within the mind. Drawn from one of Daphne du Maurier's tales, this elliptical psychic thriller never fails to profoundly engage, mesmerize, terrify, and move me.

10. Tobe Hooper's *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* (1974): On first viewing, one of the most relentless of contemporary horror films; on subsequent viewings, a brilliantly crafted pitch-black comedy, too ("Look what your brother did to the door!").

11. David Lynch's *ERASERHEAD* (1976): Evocative of Bunuel, Polanski, and Samuel Beckett, this one-of-a-kind feature edges from an oppressive urban dreamscape into one of the most tactile domestic nightmares ever committed to film. *The Lady in the Radiator* is disturbing, but, oh, that baby!

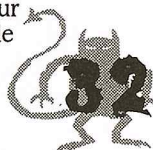
12. David Cronenberg's *THE BROOD* (1980): Cronenberg crawls under my skin like no other filmmaker. In a perverse twist on (and indictment of) recovered memory and "inner child" therapy, "Psychoplasms" urges its survivor patients to externalize their internal rage, culminating in tragedy and a genuinely startling climactic revelation. The monstrous titular metaphor galvanizes this harrowing portrait of a family ravaged by the cruel legacy of child abuse.

13. Lars Von Trier's *THE KINGDOM* (1996), *THE HAUNTING* (1962), *CARNIVAL OF SOULS* (1963) and *LADY IN WHITE* (1987) top my list of best ghost movies. Lars Von Trier one-ups them all with this lengthy mini-series set in a haunted hospital that literally sent shivers up my spine.

Those are my current favorites, but here's the five most genuinely horrifying films that come to mind. These are not entertainments: these are repulsive, straight-from-the-gut horror movies, dead serious and absolutely no fun; recommended for diehards only.

1 CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST (1979): Ruggero Deodato's parable of soured Third World relations — primitives are butchered by documentary filmmakers, and in turn butcher

WICKED



them —is at once the summit and nadir of the notorious Italian cannibal movie cycle. The film-within-a-film structure is cleverly conceived and executed, but the mayhem is, at times, nigh on unbearable.

2. HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER (1984): Unflinching amoral snapshot of a contemporary American monster who is excruciatingly familiar and human, a condemnation of the society that created him by failing to in any way connect with or contain him. As such, one of the most moral films of our times.

3. COME AND SEE (1985): An orphaned Russian child's terrifying passage through the hellish WW2 landscape. The most horrifying war film I've ever seen; once seen, never forgotten, comparable to Jerzy Kosinski's novel *The Painted Bird*.

4. IN A GLASS CAGE (1989): A vicious cycle of sexual abuse entraps an iron-lung bound pedophile (who also conducted medical experiments on children in the Nazi concentration camps) when one of his victims, now a teenage boy, becomes his caretaker. Exquisitely mounted, performed, and photographed: you are afraid to watch, but cannot look away, as the debasing spiral between tortured and torturer closes its coils.

5. THE BEGOTTEN (1991): Sans any comprehensible narrative or characters, this is the ultimate nightmare movie to date. A frightful tableau of birth, death, and abandonment dissolves into a dense, dark mire of cloaked figures, writhing forms, vile textures, and unspeakable emotions.



Street Smarts

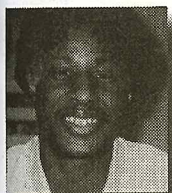
by Roscoe

Q: What would you like the epitaph on your gravestone to read?



Javiera Beanavente
Age 24
Amherst
Program Coordinator

A: "She lived. She laughed. She loved."



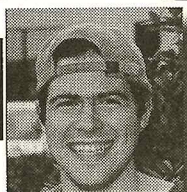
John Goldsby
Age 35
Amherst
Program Coordinator

A: "I have been seen at 7-11."



Bob Mazur
Age 49
Amherst
Therapist

A: "Here lies what?"



Chauncy "Tuck" Young
Age 22
Amherst
Student

A: "I leave you all the meaningless thoughts of my mind. All the dreams for which I strive and always the moment when I'm alive. I call you back because I've died. See why?"



Joseph Rapoza
Age 31
Northampton
Social Worker

A: "He lived life to its fullest. He loved and was loved. He travelled the world. And he left his footprints behind."



Candace Bradbury-Carlin
Age 31
Northampton
Designer

A: "She laughed. She cried. It was beautiful."

Guilty Pleasures

Interesting Failures In Film Available On Video @

by Michael Charles Hill

THE HARVEST

1995 written and directed by David Marconi

starring Miguel Ferrer, Leilani Sarelle, Harvey Fierstein, Henry Silva, Tim Thomerson, Anthony Denison, and Matt Clark

It's no secret that Hollywood is in love with itself. Witness the spate of films that chronicle the misspent lives of young "wannabe" actors and actresses, middle-aged divas suffering nervous breakdowns because the roles they used to play are now being offered to younger and more beautiful ingenues, and aging hack directors who firmly believe that they have one last masterpiece still left in them. Most of these films are so bad that not only do I want to demand my money back after the end credits roll, I also want to demand back my time spent watching them.

But few films about Hollywood movie-makers are as brilliant as Nick Ray's *IN A LONELY PLACE*, Robert Altman's *THE PLAYER*, and George Huang's *SWIMMING WITH SHARKS*. And then there is David Marconi's inspired and inventive film, *THE HARVEST*.

Miguel Ferrer [*ROBOCOP*, *POINT OF NO RETURN*] stars as Charlie Pope, a down-on-his-luck screenwriter who is about to have his project taken away from him by his less than sympathetic producer, played by Harvey Fierstein [*TORCH SONG TRILOGY*, *INDEPENDENCE DAY*]. Charlie pleads for one last chance and convinces the producer to fly him down to Mexico to research his "true story that he thought made up" about an unsolved murder.

However, south of the border, the change of scenery does nothing for his writer's block, that is until he discovers a more interesting story within his story and meets Natalie, another tourista played by Leilani Sarelle [*NEON MANIACS*, *BASIC INSTINCT*], and the film's prerequisite femme fatale.

What Charlie thought was a contract mob hit was actually the grisly murder of a vacationing gringo pornographer/child molester. And the man leading the police investigation, Detective Victor Topo, played by the always villainous Henry Silva [*THE TALL T*, *THE VIOLENT BREED*], is the uncle of the young boy who was last seen with the dead man.

No sooner does he begin his own inquiry, despite his producer's virulent objection to the screenplay's new theme, Charlie is brutally attacked and wakes up five days later only to discover that one of his kidney's is missing and so is Natalie.

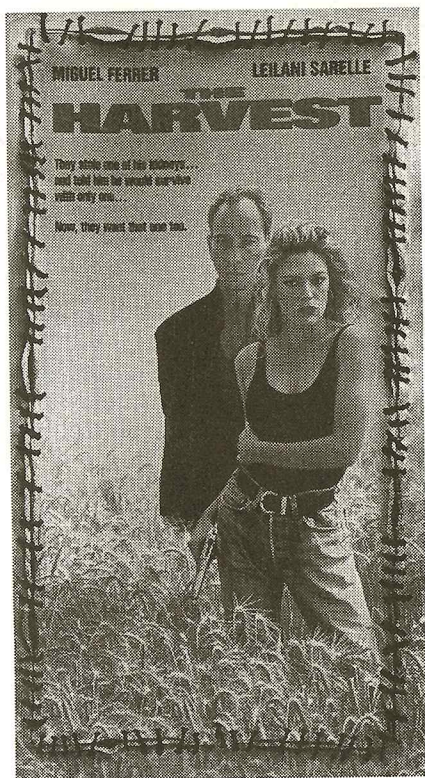
Charlie reports his misadventure to the police only to learn that Detective Topo is the investigating officer and that "things are done differently down there — with another system of justice and another set of rules".

As Charlie continues his investigation, he is abducted at gunpoint by a fellow Americano, Noel, outrageously played by Anthony Denison [*CRIME STORY*, *FULL ECLIPSE*], complete with bleached blonde hair and red toenails. Once again, Charlie seeks intervention from Topo and discovers, almost too late, that he too is involved in his original attack.

A desperate Charlie tracks down Natalie and together, they return to California, only to be followed by Noel and his shotgun-toting and scalpel-wielding cronies. It seems the first kidney was rejected by it's new host and now they want Charlie's other one.

While I'd be the first to admit that so far this sounds rather conventional — trust me, it is anything but. In fact, this story has all the elements of the sawed-off, double-barrel poetry of Warren Zevon's

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PIRATE JENNY IS RED HOT

by Dave Burruto

Pirate Jenny is not the feminine version of an archetype seafaring evil-doer but rather a local, land-loving rock trio. The band formed in 1994 and is comprised of guitarist and vocalist Amy Greene, guitarist and vocalist Aimee Swift, and drummer Jon Carisi.

Since their formation the trio has developed at a steady pace, creating a sound similar to 90's pop combined with an understated style reminiscent of the previous decade.

"I always felt that we could have been called alternative back in the 80's -- we could have been that kind of alternative rock," says Swift. "I think we're definitely a songwriter band though. We really pay a lot of attention to each part of the song, the lyrics, but also the arrangement, the guitar tones and drum parts. We're not a jam band. Each song has an arrangement and I really like to do a lot of dynamic changes. Getting louder and bigger and then coming down to very soft."

Both Swift and Greene alternate between guitar and bass duties, as well as vocals, but the differences are subtle. Their power chords are strong but not masked by the all-too-common distortion and fuzz of "alternative rock." Their songs are driven by harmonies, melodic chords, and dynamic, while not always obvious, changes.

The band's reliance on arrangement in place of volume is consistent with their lyrical content. Their songs are often detailed

gnettes devoid of the usual themes of love, drugs, and the pursuit of oblivion.

"I like to write short biographical sketches of real and fictitious people," says Greene.

While some of their vignettes are filled with some elements of drama others reflect both Greene and Swift's sense of humor and penchant for original themes.

They had a few little

funny ones like 'Mikey,'" says Swift. "Mikey" is more of a social commentary, Mikey from Life Cereal, and whether or not you believe Mikey died from Pop Rocks and Coca-Cola. It's about what you hear and what you believe."

In 1995 Pirate Jenny released their first, and to date only, solo release in the form of a two-track 7" and a three-song cassette. The cassette, self-titled, is representative of Pirate Jenny's guitar-laden pop tunes. The primarily clean guitar chords are struck softly with calculated emphasis. Neither Swift nor Greene delves too deeply into guitar solos but instead rely on vocal harmonies and carefully selected tones to add layers to their music.

Both Swift and Greene can, at times, mimic the cadence and style of a 90's version of Kim Wilde while playing pop tunes that could have been penned by Joey Ramone. The second song on their cassette, entitled 'Folly,' has a unique, almost nostalgic, appeal, a simple structure and an undeniably 80's "New Wave" quality. All of the songs on their cassette bear a similarity with the same approachable and familiar pop sound.

The cassette itself was produced on the band's own Red Hot Records label. Swift and Greene created the label prior to

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clubs

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recording material for Pirate Jenny. Although they had no intention to produce other bands or musicians that changed quickly once the label was established.

"It started out just for ourselves but we immediately wanted to do a local compilation," says Greene.

Following their own release, Swift and Greene organized the "Live in the Living Room" production for the Red Hot label recorded in December of 1995. The release features twelve area bands, including the Ray Mason Band, Encyclopedia Brown, Pirate Jenny, The Mitchells, Tizzy, New Radiant Storm King, Pangloss, Ribbon Candy, The Maggies, Hair Volume, and Stringbean. All of the tracks for the compilation were literally recorded in the living room of Swift and Greene's home.

"That was our first group project and we hope to do another one. We invited eleven bands plus us, so it was twelve bands at our house," says Swift. "We recorded them live in our living room. We did it in one weekend and they came over every two hours for two days starting at 10 o'clock in the morning and ending at 10 o'clock at night."

After the "Live in the Living Room" release Red Hot Records then released a six song cassette by local songwriter Diana Davies. Almost as soon as Red Hot Records came into being it began to play a significant role in the local music scene, as did Pirate Jenny. The effort put forth by both Swift and Greene did not go unnoticed though, as Pirate Jenny was one of three bands featured in a 1997 Continental Cablevision/Pug Productions documentary. The video is still aired occasionally on the public access cable channel in Northampton and is available at Pleasant Street Video, also in Northampton. The documentary explores the experiences of three area bands including Pirate Jenny, Tizzy, and the Mitchells, and underscores Swift and Greene's role in the community through their work at Red Hot.

Pirate Jenny are more than simply a local band -- they are a force on the musical landscape in the Valley. They have recently taken advantage of some summer down-time to write and to formulate future plans for the band and for Red Hot Records.

"We're working on new stuff and we're going to record. We need to do a full-length but to go in to a studio for a full-length costs a lot more than we want to pay," says Swift. "So we're really trying to work out the financing and we're going to invest in the equipment."

Whatever's in the future for Pirate Jenny bodes well for area music fans and for local musicians alike.

Pirate Jenny will play at Silent Cal's Cafe, 196 Pleasant Street, Northampton, on Monday, October 20 at 10 p.m. For more information call 413-587-9876.

A DOOM NATION IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

by Dave Burruto

For rock bands longevity is a rare and precious commodity, but area hard-rockers Doom Nation have somehow managed to persevere. The band began playing together in 1989 bringing a uniquely heavy and dark sound to the Valley. Nearly nine years later very little remains the same about Doom Nation but they are still the musical epicenter of aggression in the Valley scene.

Doom Nation played a mix of heavy metal and hardcore that quickly gained them an audience eagerly awaiting music to mosh to. The band found early



success with their first release iDo The Doom and were soon opening for national acts such as Loungeman, Overkill, and Veruca Salt. In the early 90's the band also had their own comic book that detailed their real and imagined adventures in the music world. The comic was produced by Dan Berger, an artist with Mirage Studios who also worked on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Berger took an early interest in the band and, in addition to creating the comic book, designed the band's familiar and macabre logos.

In the midst of early success however, Doom Nation began to experience some internal problems that have become a recurring theme in the band's history.

"We got to a certain point where we were opening up for big national acts and we were playing out of the area like mad," says Doom Nation guitarist Zeuss. "We were doing great but then we had drummer problems."

In the past eight years the band has had five different drummers in their lineup. Only within the past year has the band stabilized their membership that now includes vocalist Rus-T, drummer Sal Giancoreli, bassist Mike Sullivan, and guitarist Zuess. Giancoreli is the most recent addition to the band, replacing area musician and studio drummer Jim Weeks.



graphic by: Dan Berger

"Right after Jim left the band we went on a massive search for drummers and we tried out about five or six. Finally we found Sal. It just clicked," says Zuess.

Despite the band's difficulty in keeping a drummer they did manage to produce two releases in the 90's. "Doom With a View" and "Fruit of the Doom" were both well received locally and aided the band in maintaining a semblance of continuity.

As the band's membership has changed so has their music. Over the course of eight years they have moved from a heavy metal sound toward a more contemporary fusion of influences.

"Our whole deal from day one was really to be a rap oriented heavy metal type of band. Rus-T has always been a very creative lyricist and he always had that hip-hop influence in him," says Zeuss. "Most of our songs have him doing a hip-hop style over our music. Now it's getting to the point where the music is getting a little more experimental instead of the heavy hard-core that we used to do."

The band's new sound bears a strong similarity to what could be called "Stomp-core." A heavy style of music, akin to The Melvins, with a strong hip-hop influence evident in both the beat and the vocals. The music is a hybrid genre that draws from many influences with a strong emphasis on the drums and bass.

Doom Nation's latest material is similar to their older music but without the constant propulsion of hard driving guitar. Instead the guitar parts are now often dissonant meanderings similar to the atonal guitar stylings of Larry Lalonde of Primus. While they still incorporate the rapid-fire double bass drum pedal and a wash of minor keys, the hip-hop lyrical focus has reinvigorated a sound that would have otherwise been past its prime.

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The vocals of Rus-T, while still aggressive and full of energy, are organized and rhythmic. In an age of musical cross-pollination and hyper-evolution Doom Nation has taken a big step forward.

The band has taken other strides as of late outside of their music. Zeuss now runs his own recording studio, Planet Z, which is presently located on Market Street in Northampton. The studio will double as the recording site for the Crazy Man Records label recently started by Mike Sullivan and Zeuss.

With a new drummer, a studio, and a new independent label behind them Doom Nation are currently recording material for a future CD and preparing for a more active performance schedule.

"We're going to put out the CD and basically start gigging our asses off again. It's going to be a very long CD, maybe 16 songs," says Zeuss. "Over the course of these nine years we've got a lot of songs we want to put on disc. We want to put some of the older material on it and some of the new stuff, too."

Doom Nation is probably one of the oldest, continuously performing rock bands of its kind in the Valley. They have experienced significant regional success in the past and are now poised to regain some of that success. Barring any internal disasters Doom Nation has a new lease on life.

Disc Reviews

by Stuart Bloomfield

CORNERSHOP

- When I Was Born for the Seventh Time (Luaka Bop/Warner Brothers)

Beginning in 1992 as an inconspicuous musically-untrained punkish outfit, the London-based Cornershop has grown into being the band on the forefront of a small, yet increasingly important trend in the music world. A movement that blends traditional Asian instrumentation and song structures into the Western rock realm. Fronted by songwriter, vocalist, guitarist and dholki player Tjinder Singh, and the multi-instrumentalist Ben Ayres, the band has defined this genre-twisting trend's sound. Now, with When I Was Born ..., this British-via-India group has taken this fusion one or two leaps further,

creating one of the most exciting new releases of the year.

When I Was Born... is their third full-length disc, the long awaited follow-up to one of 1995's best, Woman's Gotta Have It. A magical juxtaposition of East vs. West traditions, Woman's... produced some truly unforgettable tracks such as the brilliant mantra of "7:20 AM Jullander Shere" or the coyly anti-racist sentiment of "Wog." However, it's clear from the new disc that Cornershop is not ready to rest at heights they've previously achieved.

Right from it's opening track the album shows Cornershop swaggering with confidence, adding even more ingredients to their eclectic world beat soup. In kicking things off with the queerly infectious zydeco accordeon shuffle of "Sleep on the Left Side," Cornershop has gleefully expanded their concept of



fusion inclusion.

On "Brimful of Asha," head 'Shopper, Tjinder, is in fine form with his oddly pleasant vocals, warm and hazy, slipping in and out of English to Punjabi. It's a gently pulsing pop charmer about the love of 7 inch singles, complemented by orchestra strings and a playfully sexual chorus, "Everyone needs a bosom for a pillow / Mine's on the 45. . ." A perfect single and (in a perfect world) the song that should break this band into the mainstream.

In it's midsection, When I Was Born... bubbles with energy and ideas, be it the wiggly sequencer noise of the ironically titled "Funky Days are Back Again," the album's best, "Good to Be On the Road Again" (a heavy-hearted country-wester duet with Paula Frazer of Tarnation), the extended dubby bass trip of "It's Indian Tobacco, My Friend," or the hip-hop infused "Candyman" (with Brit-based rapper, Justin Warfield, guesting). The album's breadth and scope is simply awesome; Cornershop proves they're unafraid to stir in music of other ethnic cultures...from swing jazz sampling against Brit-tech blips to Chicago acidhouse scratch beats throbbing around tabla drums.

With that said, there are several weaker cuts, such as the muddled "When the Light Appears, Boy" which finds the recently deceased Allan Ginsberg mumbling through one of his latter poems in a crowded Indian market. It's an interesting experiment, probably included as an homage to the beat king, butorn.. it should've been designated to a B-side rather than being included here. Another disappointment is the closing cover of the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood," with Singh translating the sitar-heavy original's lyrics into Punjabi. Again the idea of melding the Beatles even closer to their Indian influenced passions is a clever jab at re-appropriation, but Cornershop's take could have been more adventurous.

Part of the power of Cornershop's earlier output was the subversive political flavor of Singh's second-class-minority-among-the-masses lyrics. Aside from the "Norwegian Wood" stab, Singh seems less concerned with directly addressing matters of classism and racism on When I Was Born... This downplay of political ideas is somewhat disappointing. But these few criticisms are minor and on a less

impressive album would have gone unnoticed.

When I Was Born... has upped the ante on how rock is categorized; blurring the lines, bringing 'world beat' classification to a more encompassing and accessible genre. Cornershop is a prime example of a band interested in creating a global sound, rather than simply presenting exotic Third World sounds to Westerners. They share enthusiasm in this pursuit with others like the sample-crazy Black Star Liner, techno guru Talvin Singh, jazz percussionist Trilok Gurtu, world fusionist John McLaughlin, the drum'n'bass outfit State of Bengal, teen-siren Amar, as well as the Pat Boones of the genre, Kula Shaker; this pursuit is one of the more fascinating directions current 'alternative' music is taking.

If you haven't heard the 'Shoppers before then strap in for a head-spinning trip around their musical globe. Thanks to Cornershop, world beat is coming full circle.



KRISTEEN YOUNG

- Meet Miss Young & Her All Boy Band (World Domination)

An unbelievably solid debut album from an artist with a gigantic vocal range and a taste for weird song structure and lyrics. Happily proclaiming no guitarist in the liner notes, you'd be hard pressed to believe it after listening to the power that Young at the piano, together with her bassist and drummer, can produce.

Young, an operatically trained singer, comes across as a distorted mix of Kate Bush (whose keyboard-based compositions of which her music is reminiscent), Cyndi Lauper (whose quirky charms she has in spades) and Diamanda Galas (whose penchant for screeching at the top of her lungs she shares). Thrown in a little of Kristin Hersh manic-depressive madness and you start to get an idea what you're dealing with.

At times Meet Miss... is haunting ("Fishnet" or the disc's best, "P. E. 9. 14"), other times geeky/funny ("Yummy" or "Friend or Faux"), while other moments are downright bone-chilling ("Marley's Ghost" or "Now You Can Not Live"). Young's diversity sur-

prises with every track.

Easy to draw comparison, hard to pigeonhole, and wholly original. Kristeen Young has created an album that is, in a word, exceptional.



BETH ORTON

- Trailer Park (Dedicated/Heavenly)

Described as a cross between folk and the newly categorized 'electronica' genres, Orton (best known for guesting on several Chemical Brothers



tracks) has created an album that at first sounds fresh, but perhaps a little simplistic. On further listening, however, the complexity of integrating these clashing styles reveal London's Orton to be more than a run-of-the-mill Sarah McLaughlin clone.

Trailer Park manages to dazzle equally on both ends of the spectrum of styles, be it the earthy "Don't Need A Reason," with Orton's nostalgic strumming and plaintive vocalizing, or the otherworldly "Galaxy of Emptiness" with it's swirling atmospherics and dub beats coupled with bitterly self-reflective lyrics. Melancholy has never sounded so good.

With this debut US release, Orton proves herself to be a songwriter with an intriguing twist on standard musical themes. One to watch.



KENICKIE

- At the Club (Warner Brothers)

Hey kids! You want some new pop superheroes? Fuck the Spice Girls cuz here comes Kenickie! This disc could well be the perfect cure for your post-summer blahs. Armed



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with enough pop sensibility, an arsenal of guitar weaponry, and plenty of bitersweet lyrical barbs, At the Club puts to shame everything on today's U. S. top 40 chart.

After leaving Slampt, the excellent indie label, and producing several 7"s, Kenickie became a favorite of John Peel on BBC. The exposure from his radio hour lead to contact with the Stanley/Wiggs-St. Etienne team, a major label deal, and finally ...Club, the Leeds four piece's full length debut.

This ascent to notoriety has come quickly. The foursome are all under drinking age but their confidence shows as they happily bounce back and forth between zippy pop numbers and gnarly punk noise. Comparisons come to mind to That Dog, Letters to Cleo (if Letters to Cleo were any good), a less moody Lush, or to their U. S. touring pals, Bis. Fronted by Lauren Laverne and Marie Du Santiago, the two trade off singing duties on the 17 tracks. Kenickie's world revolves around discos, fashion, love loss, fucking with gender roles, bad self-esteem, the love of PVC clothing, partying and basically everything else teens and 20

some things need to know about for a fulfilling life.

Rolling out with the punchy single, "In Your Car," Kenickie immediately defines their sound. Innuendoes abound ("Is this your machine? / Don't tell father / I see you keep it clean") and bratty to fa fault, Kenickie smirks at the girl/boy conventions of dating, complete with goofy horn section chorus. The album really takes off beginning with the girl power anthem "Classy," a speedy rocker accented with spacy retro-synth spirals. It's followed by the fuck-you sentiment of "Punka," a smart-alecky jab that pokes at the DIY punk attitude still professed by too many questionably talented Brit label riot grrrl/boy bands. Sure, Kenickie can rock, but "Hey Punka, I've got ambition" also. They string together one poppy gem after another.

As will almost any album as perky as this, if you're not in the right mood, ...Club can wear thin, especially towards its finish. "Come Out 2 Nite" feels like a repeat of "Nightlife," while "I Never Complain" is just plain dull in Laverne's vocal delivery and its timid noise build ups. However, the closing

acidic ballad, "Acetone," redeems the album's low points. I've always been a sucker for soaring string arrangements mixed to an acoustic seeting such as this. Throw 'em next to lyrics like "...as I spit my dying wish / you're listening to something else" and you've got a near classic. The unlisted single-track hidden at the disc's end is also a winner.

Debut albums are always a tough gauge of talent. Can they keep it up? Do they really have anything to say? How long did it take the band to collect their material? It remains to be seen if these kids have shown all they're worth or not, but for now the sky's the limit for the youthful Kenickie. With their best foot forward, fists in the air and sense of humor intact, ...Club makes you wanna believe Kenickie can single-handedly save the stale pop world.



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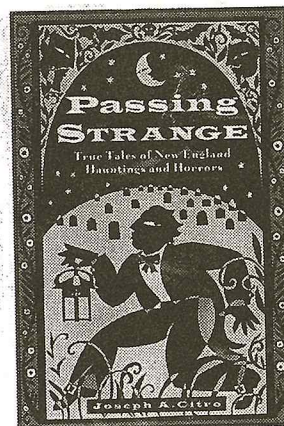
lyricism and the drug-induced paranoia of Hunter S. Thompson's journalism.

Relax. I haven't revealed anything above and beyond the basic premise. That's because, not unlike the creators of *THE USUAL SUSPECTS*, Marconi has more tricks up his sleeve, even though I personally think he makes you wait a little too long to deliver them as he prolongs the second act. But, the third act "kicks ass" and you owe it to yourself to see this one all the way through to it's flesh-tingling finale, with a "payoff" that will take you completely by surprise.

And, upon a second viewing, you will appreciate even more Marconi's clever plotting, as well as, his intricate layering of details, scene by scene, creating a rich tapestry of tightly interconnecting weaves. Unlike most films, there are no throw-away scenes - every scene and every line of dialogue is there for a reason.

In addition to being a hyper-intense thriller, and a visual tour de force, this film accurately portrays the hellish life of a struggling Hollywood screenwriter.

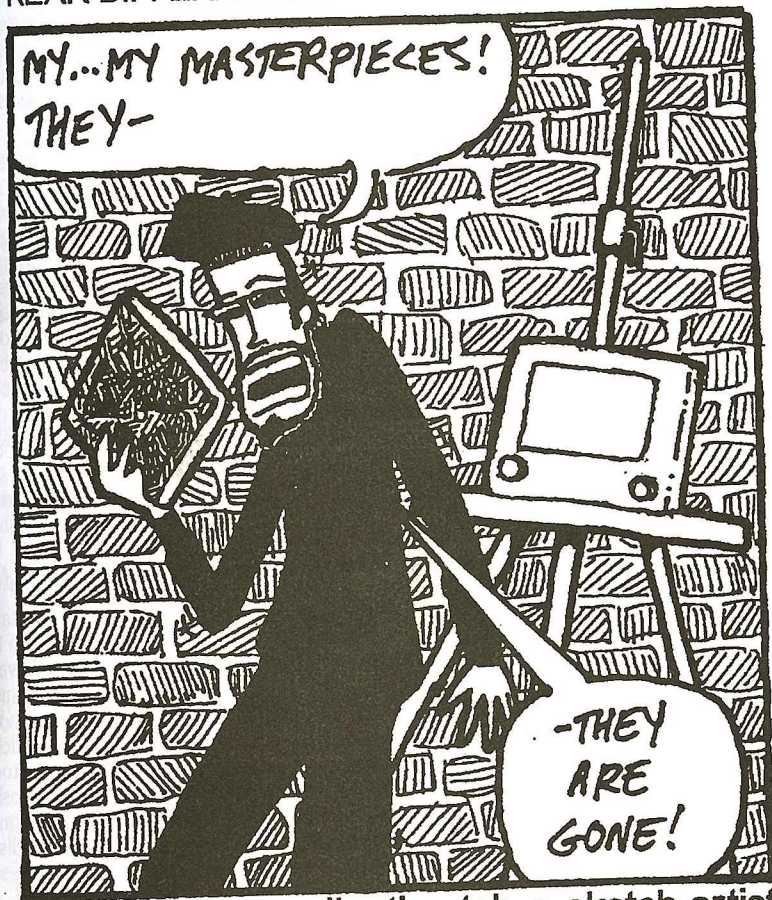
As Charlie Pope says; "Ouch, babe!"



Passing Strange
*True Tales of New England
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epileptic etch-a-sketch artist

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Publication date: October 31, 1997



V-MAG

THE NURSE IS IN

by Jessica Berger, RN, BA.

HEPTAVAX VACCINE SAVES LIVES

The word is out. Hepatitis B is the number one bloodborne communicable disease—100 times more contagious than AIDS, claiming 300,000 lives a year. Like AIDS, there is no cure for the Hepatitis B virus. But fortunately for all, there is a safe, effective vaccine that will protect you, your children, and your loved ones from this serious disease. Below you will find information about Hepatitis B, and ways to safeguard your own and your children's health from this life-threatening illness.

So, what is Hepatitis B anyway?

Hepatitis B is a contagious viral disease that causes liver damage. Your liver is responsible for many things, including food breakdown, waste removal, and blood clotting. When your liver is damaged by Hepatitis B, nutritional deficiencies, breathing difficulties, bleeding problems, and even death can result.

Can anyone catch Hepatitis B?

Anyone who has not been vaccinated with the Heptavax or Recombivax Hep B vaccine can catch Hepatitis B if they are exposed to the virus. People especially susceptible to the disease are: health-care workers and their unborn children, people with more than one sexual partner, and people who share needles used to inject drugs.

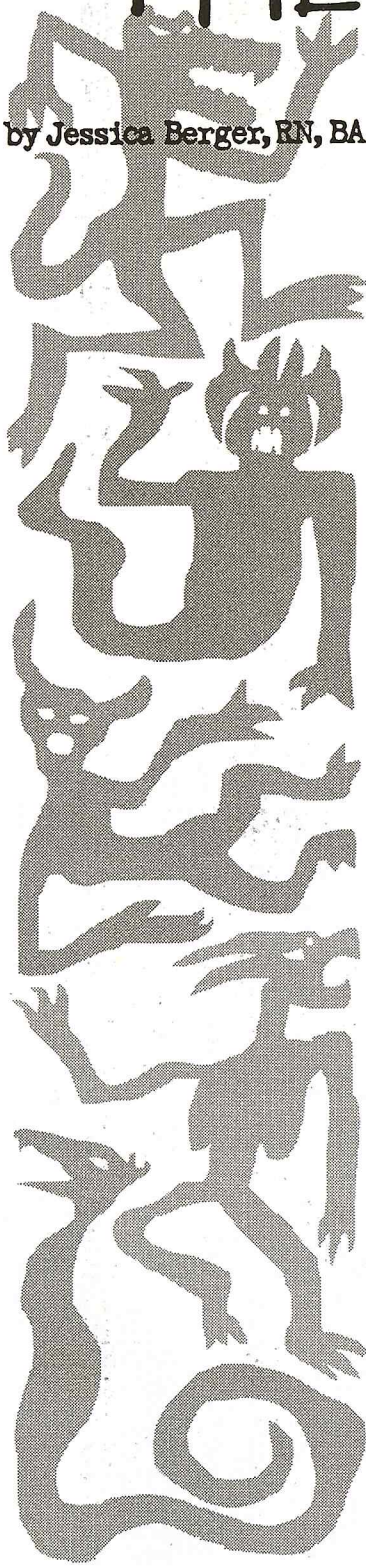
How is Hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B spreads from one person to another through contact with blood, semen, and vaginal fluids. This means that the disease is spread not only through sexual contact, but also by sharing needles, including those used for tattooing, ear piercing, body piercing, and drugs. Infected mothers can spread the disease to their babies at birth. Health care workers can catch the disease by accidentally sticking themselves with a dirty needle. You can catch Hepatitis B if the blood of an infected person touches your skin where you have a cut. Hepatitis B can be spread by sharing a toothbrush, razor, or anything else that might have blood on it. Hepatitis B is very contagious. It survives outside of the body for a week or more. This means that dried blood on a tabletop that touches a scrape on your elbow could give you the disease.

Hold on a minute. You can catch Hepatitis B from getting a tattoo? I just got this tattoo last week. Do you think I should worry? What if I caught Hepatitis B at the tattoo parlor and spread it to my girlfriend?

There are several actions that you can take to allay your concerns. You can find out whether or not you contracted Hepatitis B by requesting a Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) test at your doctor's office. This will tell you definitively whether you are positive or negative for Hepatitis B. If your test results come back negative, then you can feel good that your girlfriend is safe, too. Before your next tattoo, be sure to have received the Heptavax series (discussed later), which will protect you from the virus. Do not be bashful about researching your tattoo artist's sterile technique. Make sure that for every customer, the artist uses a fresh needle. Be certain that the artist washes hands and wears gloves before contacting any body fluids. Lastly, obtain unequivocal evidence that the artist disposes of the unused portion of ink rather than returning it to the bulk. These practices assure your safety from Hepatitis B and other diseases as well.

I play girl's rugby in Canada. It's a messy sport, and a bloody one too. If two players suffer minor lacerations on the field and continue to



play, can one Hepatitis B positive player infect another Hepatitis B negative player

In theory, yes. Bloody contact sports do pose a risk for spreading this virus, especially when players are unvaccinated. However, this mode of transmission is currently unheard of. In other words, athletic activity is not categorized as high risk behaviour.

What if someone who has Hepatitis B sneezes or coughs on me? Can I catch Hepatitis B then?

No. Sneezing and coughing do not spread the disease, unless bloody mucus from the cough somehow enters your body, which is improbable.

Who suffers more from Hepatitis B, children or adults?

Hepatitis B affects children more seriously than it affects adults. For 6-9% of the adults infected with Hepatitis B, disease will be permanent. These odds are much worse for youngsters. Ninety percent of the infants and fifty percent of the children who catch Hepatitis B will have it for the rest of their lives. Lifelong carriers of the disease face the likelihood of liver cancer, liver failure, and even death. Fortunately, the Hepatitis B vaccine is now mandatory for admission into kindergarten for all children born on or after January 1, 1992.

What are the signs and symptoms of Hepatitis B?

At least one half of all people infected by Hepatitis B will have no symptoms at all or very mild, flu like symptoms. Other patients complain of extreme fatigue, stomach aches, nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, and fever. The person with Hepatitis B may experience jaundice, a darkening of the urine, and yellowing of the skin and eyes. In addition to these changes, people with Hepatitis B may suffer from aching joints, skin rashes, and overall depression.

Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?

NO! THERE IS NO CURE FOR HEPATITIS B! Many adults with Hepatitis B do get better without treatment. But for those who don't, the consequences are serious, because 2.2% of these infected individuals will die. This means that for every 200 adults who catch Hepatitis B, four of them will die.

Can I prevent my child and myself from contracting this disease?

YES! THERE IS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINE THAT PREVENTS HEPATITIS B. It is called Recombivax HB. The vaccination is given in three separate doses. The recommended Hepatitis B vaccination schedule is:

- 1st dose - at elected time
- 2nd dose - 1 month later
- 3rd dose - 6 months after the first dose

What should I do if I come in contact with the virus but have not been vaccinated?

Without delay, get a shot of HBIG (Hepatitis B Immune Globulin), along with the first dose of the Heptavax vaccine. The HBIG injection will protect you right away, but this pro-

tection will only last from 1-3 months. So, be sure to be vaccinated with all three doses of the Heptavax vaccine, acquiring your first dose of the three along with the HBIG.

Are there any side effects or risks to receiving this vaccine? Does the benefit of getting this vaccine outweigh the risk?

YES! The Hepatitis B vaccine is safe, with few or no side effects. You can expect to feel sore where the shot was given- usually in the shoulder. Allergic reactions to this vaccine are extremely rare. This safe vaccine can save your life from a serious disease. Your risk for injury is astronomically higher driving a car than it is for any vaccination.

I want my children to be vaccinated, but I don't know if I can afford it.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants and adolescents receive the Hepatitis B Vaccine. The Massachusetts Department of Health will provide the vaccine free of charge to unimmunized infants and children. Please ask your healthcare provider for more information

In conclusion, the Heptavax vaccine series is a safe, effective means of preventing Hepatitis B, a disease that is extremely contagious and presently incurable. The vaccine is widely available, free to children, and paid for by employers of health care workers. Whether or not you fall into a high risk category, you are indeed at risk for contracting this disease if you are unvaccinated. Therefore, the writer highly recommends that you actively protect yourself from this epidemic illness. Please treat yourself to all three shots!



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V-MAG

DAYTRIPPERS

by Jane M. Falla

In the clean, uncluttered rooms of a sprawling mansion on a soft, still New England road rest the works of such renowned artists as Homer, Cassatt, Sargent, Degas, Monet, Renoir and Van Gogh. One would expect only a trip to New York or Paris could produce such a repertoire, but no need to deal with bustling crowds and city traffic.

Consider instead a relaxing country drive to the pristine village of Williamstown, Massachusetts, where the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute invites you into a world of discovery.

Just an hour-and-a-half to a two-hour drive from the Amherst/Northampton area, the Clark Art Institute capitalizes on the notion that the best things in life are free. And what is art if not shared with eyes eager to behold? Visitors to the Institute are welcome to wander and enjoy its many galleries free of charge.

Owned by Robert Sterling and Francine Clark, the Clark Art Institute opened in 1955. The couple shared a lifelong enthusiasm for art collecting and moved their continually expanding body of works from Paris to New York, settling finally in Williamstown after searching for a safe home for their cherished collection of paintings, sculptures and other works of art. Robert Sterling Clark owed his love affair with art, in part, to his father, from whom he inherited a number of works. Clark was able to continue the tradition, thanks to his position as heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune. His grandfather was Isaac Singer's business partner. Both Clark's grandfather and father were trustees of Williams College, which ultimately led the Clarks to Williamstown.

Robert Sterling Clark was reportedly leery of museum and art advisers, and "took a jaundiced view of directors, critics and art historians," according to literature from the Clark Institute. Perhaps that attitude is what has made the Clark Art Institute so special—it enables art to be accessible to everyone, making recognition of beauty contingent only upon an open mind, not education or status.

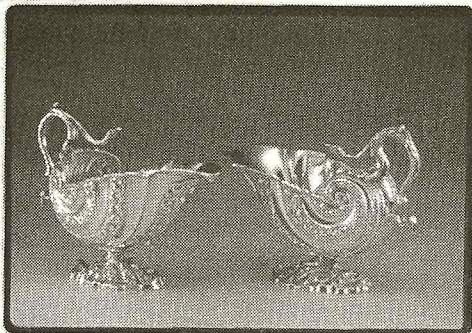
Despite a substantial number of visitors the day I went to the Institute, upon entering I felt an immediate sense of clarity and relaxation. The galleries have benches that encourage you to simply sit, stare and imagine. The pictures are beautifully arranged throughout the Institute's two buildings: the older Marble Building and the newer Granite Building, the latter of which was completed in 1973. The buildings are joined by a connecting hall, with the Granite Building housing the museum shop, an auditorium, library and a lovely little trellised cafe.

The Institute's buildings are also a work of art themselves, with grounds that fittingly complement the architecture. The galleries are cozy and inviting, with subtle wall tones that don't overshadow the paintings and sculptures. Among the design concepts worth noting is that the paintings are given ample space to hang, and

Paul Crespin
Sauce Boat (Pair)

London, 1745/46

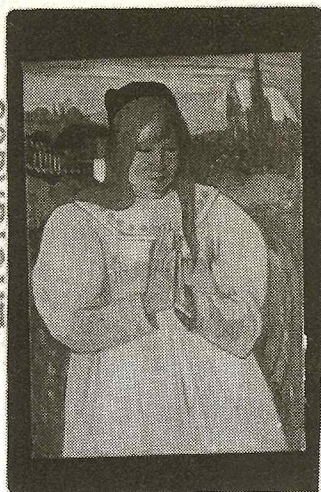
Silver: h. 15.7. 15.4 cm



©Sterling and Francine Clark Art
Institute, Williamstown, Mass.

1986.21

MADE IN U.S.A.



Paul Gauguin
Breton Girl in Prayer, 1894
Oil on canvas

#210

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STERLING & FRANCINE
CLARK ART INSTITUTE

NOV 06 1996

the frames are as equally stunning as the paintings themselves.

Enter the museum at the Granite Building, where American 19th Century paintings hang in two galleries. In Gallery B I was awestruck by two works of George Inness—"Home at Montclair," an oil on canvas completed in 1892, and "Wood Gatherers: An Autumn Afternoon," an oil on canvas done in 1891. Those two paintings are only the beginning of the adventure.

The Marble Building houses a sizable collection of paintings, sculpture, silver, glass and porcelain, all divided among 14 galleries. The works of this permanent collection are grouped into several categories: Italian Renaissance, Netherlandish, European, French, American, furniture, glass, porcelain, silver and works on paper.

Three other galleries offer special exhibitions. "Marks of Excellence: Master Drawings from the John and Alice Steiner Collection," and an exhibit of the Institute's silver collection will be on display through January 4, 1998.

Beautiful works of art never fail to inspire delight and introspection. Your passage through the Clark Institute's galleries will leave you a different person than when you entered. The Institute encourages visitors to reflect upon the beauty of nature and history, and to appreciate the gift that we are all given to recognize beauty and revel in it.

Go Ahead

The Clark Institute is a quarter of a mile south from the intersection of routes 2 and 7. Travel on the Mass Pike to Route 7 to Williamstown, or take Route 91 North to Route 2 West. The latter path is the more scenic route, taking you on a winding road with a hairpin turn and incredible mountain views.

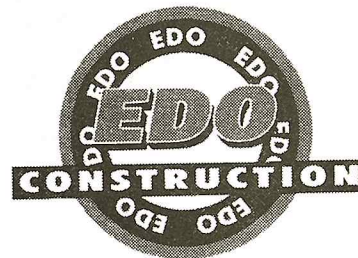
From September through June, the Institute is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the galleries are wheelchair accessible. Guided tours are available, and audio tapes are \$3.00. The grounds are equipped with picnic facilities, and the surrounding town and Williams College are worth visiting as well.

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225 South Street
Williamstown, MA 01267
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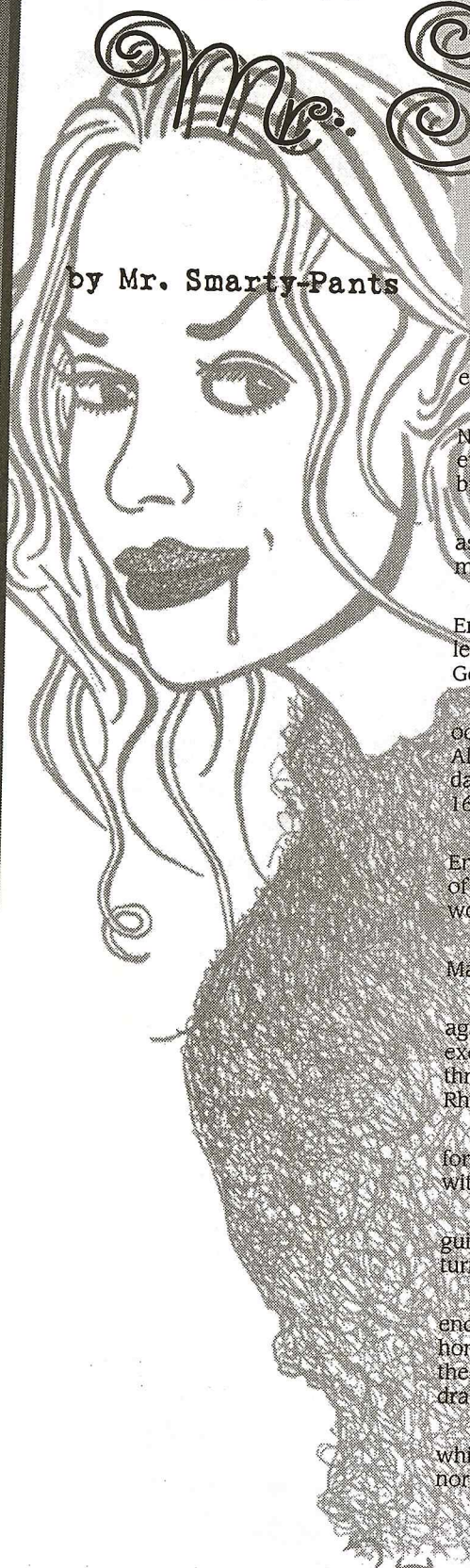
Daytrippers



ASK

Mr. Smarty-Pants

by Mr. Smarty-Pants



Dear Mr. Smarty-Pants; During the period of the witch trials in Massachusetts did any occur in western Mass. or the Pioneer Valley?

There were in fact several trials for witchcraft in western Massachusetts and even more at the settlement in Hartford, Connecticut.

During the witch mania of the mid to late seventeenth century hundreds of New Englanders, mostly women, were accused of trafficking with infernal powers. Of the many who were accused it is likely that no more than half were ever brought to trial and probably fewer than 100 were actually executed.

Some of the sources that I have read suggest that there may have been as few as 36 official executions of supposed witches. As to how many women and men may have been surreptitiously killed by paranoid neighbors none can say.

Fortunately it is possible to say that the death toll from witch trials in New England never reached anywhere near the frightful body counts of Europe. In at least two sources I have seen the number of people executed for witchcraft in Germany alone number in the thousands.

The first recorded execution for witchcraft in the New England colonies occurred in Hartford on 26 May 1647 when Alice Young (her name was spelled Alse in the record) was hanged. In what may be only a strange coincidence her daughter, Alice Young Beamon, was accused of witchcraft in Springfield around 1677.

Between 1647-1663 the paranoid fear of witches was rampant in New England and at least 80 people (61 women, 19 men) were brought up on charges of sorcery. Of those charged, 33 were tried, 15 were convicted and hanged (13 women, two men).

Although most accusations of witchcraft were brought by people in Massachusetts, most of the convictions and executions were in Connecticut.

From 1662-1663 a witch panic in Hartford resulted in charges being brought against a number of people, several of whom, three women and one man, were executed. One of the women, Elizabeth Seager, was actually tried for witchcraft three times between 1663 and 1665 before she finally got fed up and moved to Rhode Island.

In 1651 a Springfield woman by the name of Mary Parsons was imprisoned for casting malicious enchantments and although she was later acquitted of witchcraft she was found guilty on other charges and may have died in prison.

Parson's husband Hugh was also accused of sorcery and was in fact found guilty by the court in Springfield in 1652 though the conviction was later overturned by the General Court in Boston.

Being acquitted of witchcraft in colonial New England was not necessarily the end of a person's ordeals. In 1683, Mary Webster, a resident of Hadley, returned home after successfully defending herself against charges of sorcery only to face the ire of her neighbors. According to local histories a small group of thugs dragged Webster out of her house, tortured her and dumped her in a snow drift.

I have not been able to find any instances of witch trials in Northampton, which was largely settled after the witch panics had died down, or any of the northern area towns such as Deerfield or Greenfield.

Hey Mr. Smarty-Pants; Is there evidence that extraterrestrials have visited the earth?

No. If there is evidence of alien visitation, I, for one, have never seen it or heard of it. This of course proves nothing, but if one listens closely to the murmuring of UFO believers one finds no physical evidence and a great deal of conspiratorial speculation.

For me it is not enough to say that "The government is telling us there's nothing out there, the government has lied before, therefore they must be hiding something now."

One question I always feel driven to ask is 'If there are intelligent aliens who have the ability to cross millions or billions of miles of interstellar space why would they keep coming here?'

After all, considering the billions of stars in our galaxy alone and the potential for planets around many of them, there have to be places that are more fun for your average bulbous-headed alien to hang around in. Personally I'd settle for a planet without Alicia Silverstone.

Dear Mr. Smarty-Pants; What sorts of things did the Indians die of before Europeans brought diseases to the New World?

Accidents, old age and other Indians. Of course there are also many diseases that are native to the western hemisphere including yellow fever, malaria and syphilis to name

but a few.

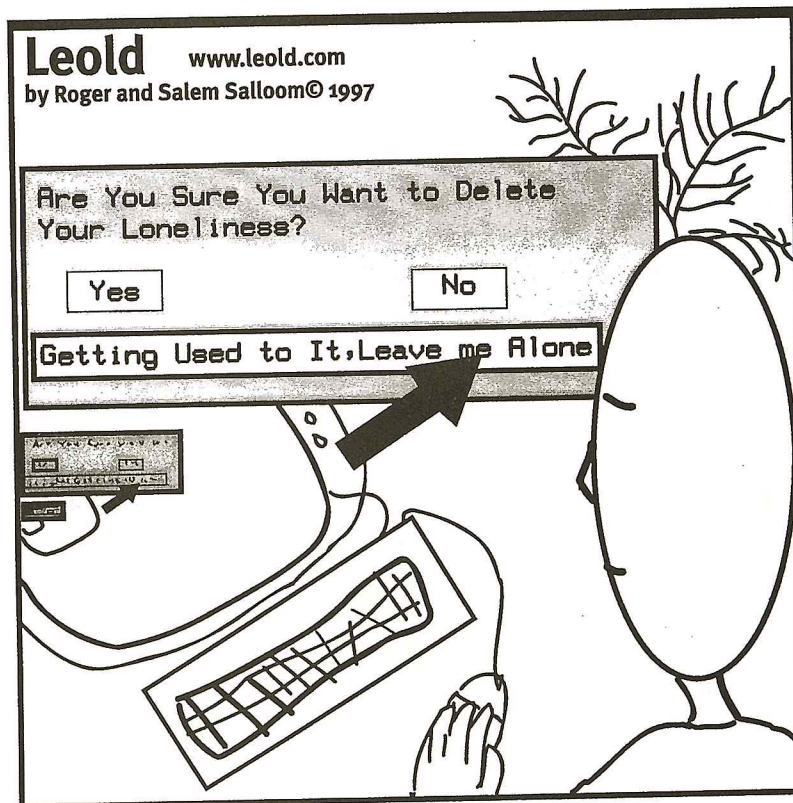
Like most humans however, the early inhabitants of the western hemisphere, if they survived the dangers of childhood, had a good chance of living to a ripe old age if they didn't fall prey to the many threats that any people who live by their wits and strength must face.

For one thing, contrary to the beliefs of many new-age thinkers, the tribes and nations that inhabited this part of the world before the incursions of the Europeans were far from peaceful. The Aztecs for example were feared and hated by most of the other tribal groups of Mexico because of their practice of sacrificing people captured in their many raids.

The Inuit and the groups who would form the Iroquois League were well known for practicing genocidal warfare and often carried out what we would now call preemptive strikes against their enemies.

On the whole though it is likely that as elsewhere in the world the vast majority of people died of injury, accident and disease.

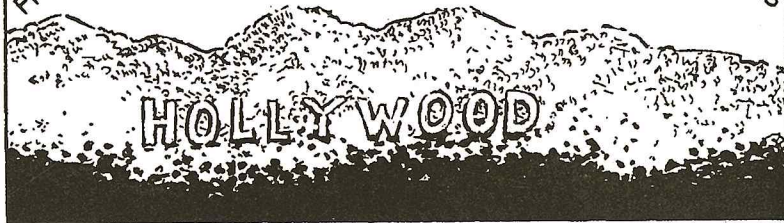
Got a question for Mr. Smarty-Pants? Just write him care of VMag, POB 774, Northampton 01061; fax him at 413-529-8087; or email via VMag@The-Spa.Com.



LIFE ON MARS



FROM THE SUN DRENCHED FORMER DESERT OF LOS ANGELES

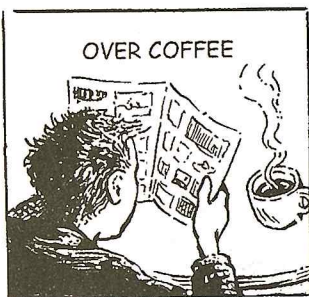
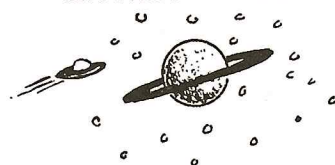


TO THE
COZY PLACE
YOU ARE AT

A CIRCLE

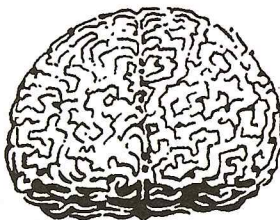


BECOMES A PLANET



OVER COFFEE

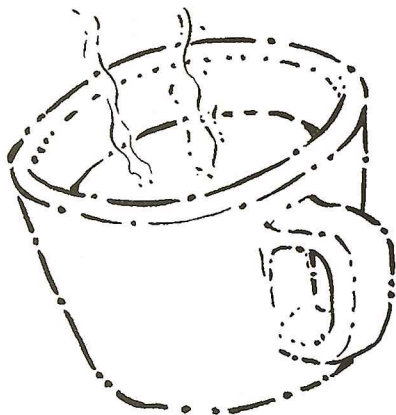
ITS TIME TO LOOK FAR AWAY



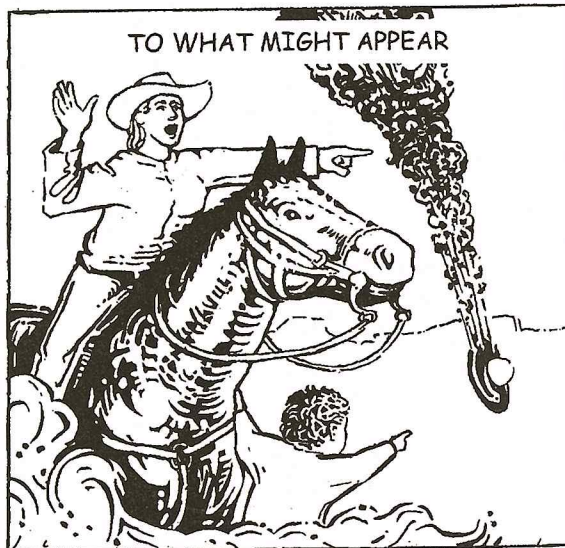
TO SEE THINGS ON THE PAGE



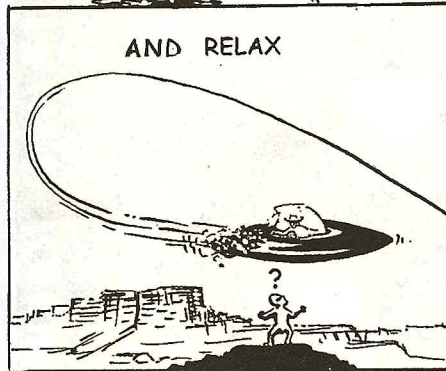
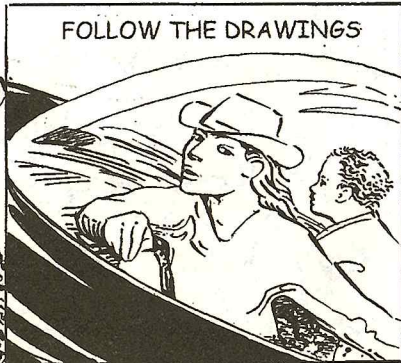
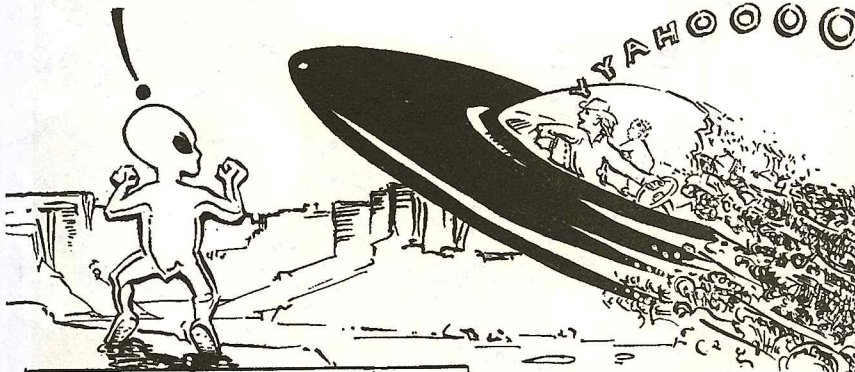
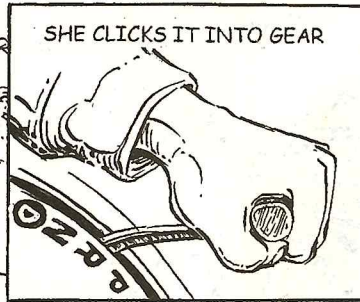
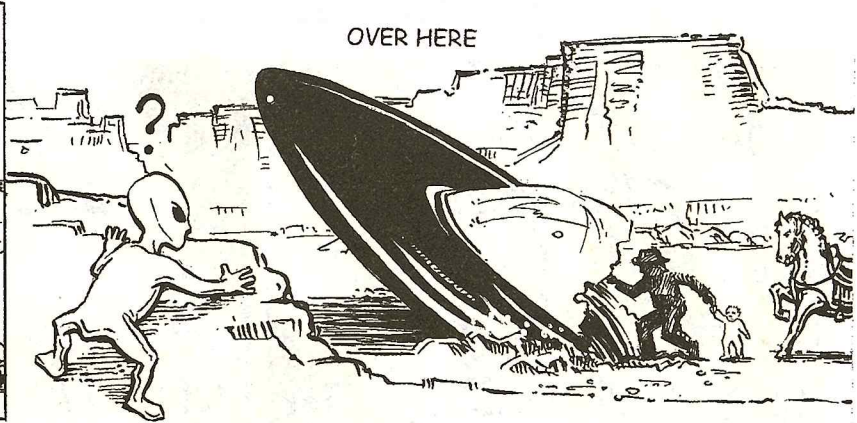
TO SEE THROUGH THE DAY



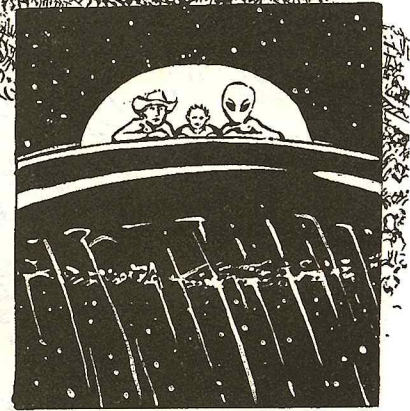
TO WHAT MIGHT APPEAR



CRUNCH!



COME TO THE RED PLANET

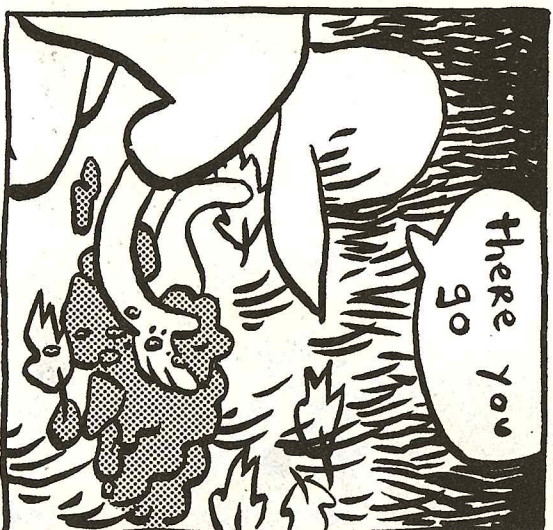
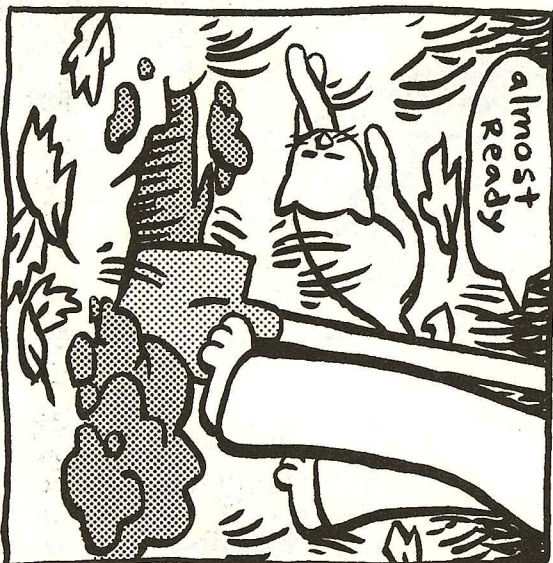


Next issue: actual footage from Mars!

by Matt Mitchell

KITTIES ARE SILLY!

BY JAMES KOENALKA
©1997



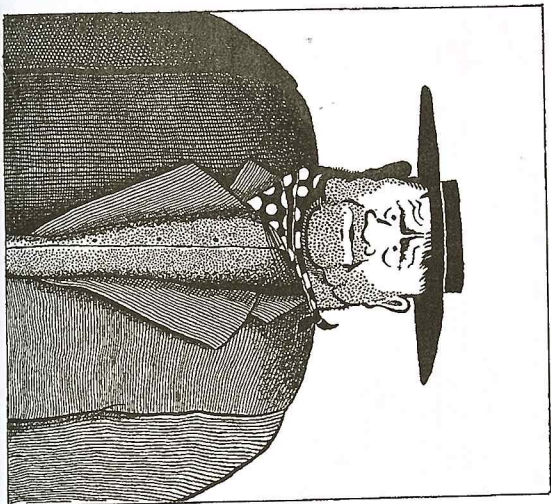
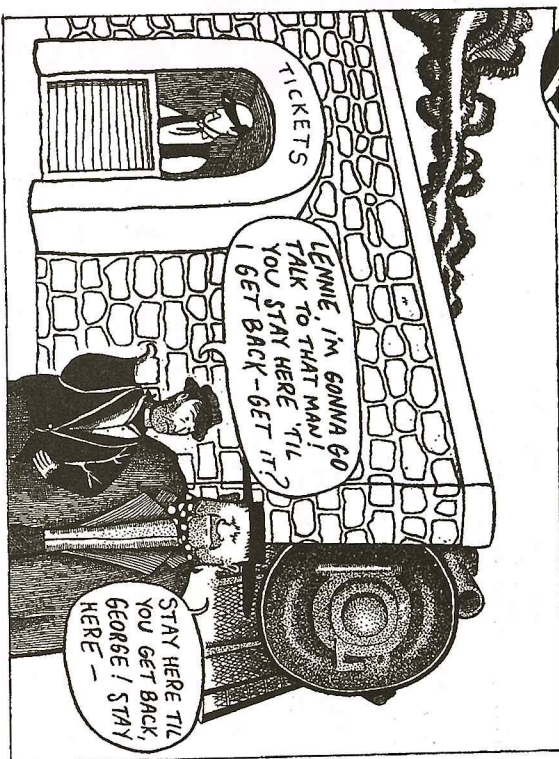
V-MAG

COMIX

COMIX



THE
FROM FURTHER ADVENTURES OF
GEORGE
AND LENNIE



by Gene Kane



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R.I.P.*

My thanks to all of this issue's contributors: Jess & Dan B, Dave B, Jane, Joe, George, Mikes Dooney, Dobbs and Hill, Bill & Dana, Chet & Bunny, Jim Z, Bill M, Daphne, Maggie, Punco, Mr. Smarty-Pants, Stuart, Roscoe, Matt, Gene, James K, Tom P, Roger & Salem (the checks are in the mail, honest). Thanks to Eleanor, Eric and Stan for being this issue's subject matter and for being such good sports about the last-minute edits (and to Ben for the last-minute illustrations). Grave thanks to Edo for the (unused) coffin. To all those who put up with my obsession with this all summer, for listening, brainstorming, criticizing, kvetching and not killing me: DNA and Caroline, Candy and Roscoe, Roland, Seth, Trish, Lizzie, Zanzibar, Lianne, Matthew, Phil, Paulie R, Rick and Cindy, Jim and Pete and anyone else I may have forgotten. To all the brave advertisers within for supporting us and putting their trust in our assurances (hope you like what you see). To Gary for preventing me from buying The Optimist. To my investors for giving me this chance. To Will and Milton for the space; Bill for the walls and Rick for the phones. Yurix for the messages and smiles. Will L for the computer system, and Craig for fixing it. To John at Star Press and to Dawn and Maureen at Northeast Marketing. To Ethan for his enthusiasm and ideas; to late arrivals Mark, Patrick, Star and Corey big thanks for coming on board. To Becky for all the years and beers. To Dan-o's counsel, Katie's quiet teachings and Linda's year-end surprise. And most of all, my deepest love and gratitude to Steve Bissette for his support and friendship (and photo archives); Andrea for her patience, feedback and late night dog walks; and to Rob, the best fucking graphic designer in the Valley, for sharing the vision and making it so much more, and without whom I could not have pulled this off.

—Murphy

*Really Important People



EDITORIAL

In Mexico the first and second of November belong to the dead. So too with our first issue (but not our second; promise).

Welcome to VMag, the new free monthly magazine for the Connecticut River Valley communities between Springfield and Brattleboro.

Every issue of VMag will have a theme that the features, for the most part, will reflect. Themes will be viewed in the context of the Valley, or at least will have some sort of linkage to the Valley, however vague. As we go along we'll add more columns (sports, environment, internet, etc.) and begin to list events (so send 'em in).

So, why another free Valley publication?

Because this one won't suck.



LETTERS

Write to us c/o VMag, POB 774, Northampton, MA 01061, or e-mail us at vmag@the-spa.com.

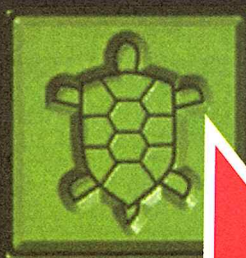


next issue: MUSIC!

available November 15 wherever free publications are found

this issue dedicated to the memory of Mark Sturm

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